NEWFOUNDLAND SHIPWRECKS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY: COMMUNITIES AND THEIR RESPONSE (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TREPASSEY AND HARBOUR GRACE)

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Newfoundland Shipwrecks in the Late Nineteenth Century: Communities and Their Response (With Special Reference to Trepassey and Harbour Grace)

by

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Abstract

In the late nineteenth century shipping routes across the North Atlantic came close to Newfoundland and ships were wrecked all around the coast. This study concentrates on how ordinary people - mainly fishermen, seafarers, and their families - responded to, and were affected by, shipwreck. It focuses on two places (Trepassey and Harbour Grace). The thesis discusses Newfoundland's colonial status and explores the attitudes residents of Great Britain and Newfoundland held about safety at sea and state responsibility. Shipwreck raised questions of moral responsibility and concerns about how to treat people with decency. The community, and to a lesser extent the Newfoundland government, provided food and clothing to survivors. They buried the dead and assisted families. Furthermore, shipwreck highlighted the political, social and economic dynamics at play within communities. This study adds historical perspective to the contemporary field of disaster studies which has gained prominence of late.

Acknowledgements

It is here that I would like to acknowledge all those who have supported me through this process. I would like to begin by thanking the School of Graduate Studies for awarding me the A. G. Hatcher Memorial Scholarship for 2001-2002. It was this award which enabled me to work full-time on my thesis during the past year. A sincere thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Valerie Burton, who inspired me to move forward into places I never thought I, or my writing, could go. Thank you for your guidance, support, and understanding. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Jim Hiller who, in my opinion, went beyond his role as graduate co-ordinator. He offered me advice and assistance and his door was one I knew was always open. I should also thank Ms. Frances Warren and Ms. Beverly Evans-Hong in the History Department office for their assistance whenever it was needed.

My study was ambitious to say the least. It meant researching a variety of topics and multiplicity of resources. At times it was like searching for a needle in a haystack, as the cliche goes, so I sought out advice from several scholars and archivists. I sent many e-mail requests to people, some who did not even know me, yet they all responded to my request promptly and were willing to help in any way possible. I sincerely thank Dr. Shannon Ryan, Dr. Thomas Nemec, Maudie Whelan, Anita Best, Dr. Raoul Andersen, Dr. Rainer Baehre, Dr. Willeen Keough, Dr. Sean Cadigan, Heather Wareham, and Larry Dohey for their advice and suggestions. I would like to especially acknowledge the assistance of Helen Kennedy, Viola Pennell, Ted Winter in Trepassey, as well as Debbie

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Preface

Historical research regularly details the lives and events of famous or infamous individuals. It is research usually dominated by the "official" view and obtained from various government or legal documents. However, the historian's awareness of ordinary people and their communities, and what they can offer to historical research, began to intensify several decades ago. It is difficult to understand the attitudes and values of the "average" person, in this case fishermen, seafarers, or their families, as such information was often not directly documented. Nonetheless, it is my understanding that combining the use of official documents with analysis of a response to certain events will provide some insight into a community. By exploring the response to shipwreck in late nineteenth century Newfoundland more can be learned about the island's residents, their attitudes about shipping safety, state and community responsibility, and moral responsibility in the late nineteenth century. More can be learned about Newfoundland communities - their economic and social organization, their diversity, and their cultures.

In Newfoundland, shipwrecks were almost commonplace. They were daily incidents which reflected the hostile environment in which seafarers, fishermen, and their families lived and worked. For the purpose of this study, the term shipwreck refers to a multiplicity of situations which may or may not involve loss of life, all of which are relevant for this thesis. It is used here to refer to any shipping casualty involving a ship (ie. fishing, sealing, whaling, passenger, etc.), whether it was wrecked at sea or on shore, abandoned at sea, or simply lost without trace. To facilitate understanding of how such

events affected Newfoundland communities in the late nineteenth century, this study will first explore the North Atlantic world of which Newfoundland was a part. Newfoundland's fishermen and seafarers lived in a British colony so they were subject to British shipping legislation. Both Newfoundland and British fishermen and seafarers travelled throughout the North Atlantic and were aware of the dangers which might be encountered. While chapter one focuses on Newfoundland and its place in the North Atlantic, the remainder of this thesis focuses on Newfoundland communities and their response to shipwreck. Several Newfoundland historians, as well as other scholars, address how late nineteenth century Newfoundland communities were organized economically and socially. They discuss how the decline in the fishery affected communities and sometimes created tensions among residents. Is it possible to determine how such factors influenced residents' response to shipwreck?

Shipwreck enables me to look at communities differently. Its occurrence leads me to ask many questions, including questions which address human dignity and survival; property and resources; and community and state responsibility. What happened to shipwreck victims and survivors? Were they the responsibility of the community or the state? Who was entitled to the cargo which washed up along a community's shores? In the late nineteenth century shipwrecks were recorded in government documents and newspapers. They were also recorded in story and song. Using such sources, among others, this study will attempt to answer some of the questions posed above.

Chapter 1: Shipwreck and Loss of Life in the North Atlantic

On April 15, 1912, the *Titanic* sank off the coast of Newfoundland with the loss of over 1500 passengers and crew. Since then, the wreck of the vessel has become maritime literature's quintessential example of disaster at sea. The ship's story has become part of popular culture[1] and its image tends to dominate both historical and contemporary literature. The tragedy has been recalled through story, song, and poetry, among other literary forms, and some writers have fictionalized this historical event by creating characters, myths, love affairs, or schemes around it.[2]

The circumstances of the loss of the *Titanic* were significant. Throughout the twentieth century, this shipwreck served as the "metaphor for the disastrous consequences of an unqualified belief in the safety and invincibility of new technology."[3] Some writers of *Titanic* literature discuss the events which occurred as the ship foundered, while others examine the disaster's inquiries and raise questions of regulatory

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[1] Some examples of how and why *Titanic* became such a part of twentieth century culture can be found in John Wilson Foster, The *Titanic* Complex: A Cultural Manifest (Vancouver, BC: Belcouver Press, 1997), Steven Biel, Down With the Old Canoe: A Cultural History of the *Titanic* Disaster (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), Paul Heyer, *Titanic* Legacy: Disaster as Media Event and Myth (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), and Jay White, "'God's Ark': Subscription Book Publishing and the *Titanic*," Acadiensis, Vol.28, No.2 (Spring 1999), pp.93-118.

[2] Foster, The *Titanic* Complex, p.25.

[3] G.J. Annas and S. Elias, "Thalidomide and the *Titanic*: Reconstructing the Technology Tragedies of the Twentieth Century," American Journal of Public Health, Vol.89, No.1 (January 1999), abstract.

failure.[4] Common to much of the literature is its treatment of the public outrage which followed the disaster. The British public were outraged over what they considered to be gross negligence on the part of the White Star Line, which owned the *Titanic*, and the British Board of Trade. Even so, public expectations of shipping safety in 1912 were already very different from the realities of the early nineteenth century. Around 1800, government involvement in the shipping industry was limited and social attitudes focused more on the state of trade rather than the preservation of seafarers' or passengers' lives. How did British society move from one which was mainly concerned about the state of trade to one which was also concerned about the lives of seafarers who prosecuted that trade? I will explore this shift in attitude by examining shipwreck and loss of life in the North Atlantic.

While *Titanic's* loss was not typical of the shipwrecks which affected most maritime communities, it raised several general questions worthy of consideration. Who was responsible for the safety of those working and travelling on the North Atlantic? The

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[4] There are numerous source which provide a history of the events surrounding the sinking of the *Titanic*. Some examples are Stephen D. Cox, The *Titanic* Story: Hard Choices, Dangerous Decisions (Chicago, Ill.: Open Court, 1999), Richard Howells, The Myth of the *Titanic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), Walter Lord, A Night To Remember (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1956), Tom Kuntz, The *Titanic* Disaster Hearings: The Official Transcripts of the 1912 Senate Investigation (New York: Pocket Books, 1998), Thomas Wingfield, "'You Do Not Give Answers That Please Me': British and American Boards of Inquiry into the *Titanic* Sinking," American Neptune, Vol.59, No.4 (1999), pp.265-285 and I. McLean and M. Johnes, "'Regulation Run Mad': The Board of Trade and the Loss of the *Titanic*," Public Administration, Vol.78, No.4 (2000), pp.729-749.

British government? Shipowners? The general public? Whose responsibility was it to ensure that the need for profit did not outweigh humanitarian concerns? Some of the questions raised by the loss of the *Titanic* can help us understand how shipwreck affected Newfoundland communities during the late nineteenth century. Through numerous examples of shipwreck, questions of government and community responsibility, questions of survival, questions of morality, among others, will be explored. In chapter one, these questions will be discussed in the broader context of the North Atlantic. According to historian Peter Neary, events in Newfoundland and events in the North Atlantic world were generally interconnected.[5] During the nineteenth century the British government and its laws applied in Newfoundland. All British legislation concerning shipping, shipwreck, and loss of life extended to Newfoundland seafarers and fishermen. All seafarers and fishermen who sailed on the North Atlantic, whether from Great Britain or Newfoundland, experienced some of the same anxieties and preoccupations. It is therefore appropriate to begin this study in the context of the North Atlantic.

1.1 The North Atlantic

The nineteenth century economies of both Great Britain and Newfoundland, although different in their organization, scope, and magnitude, were maritime. Fishermen and seafarers belonging to each place frequently travelled the world's oceans for purposes of trade and commerce and to reach many of their markets they had to travel

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[5] Peter Neary, Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-1949 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p.ix.

the North Atlantic. Although every ocean they travelled had its difficulties, to many fishermen and seafarers the North Atlantic was a particularly hostile environment. According to Alan Villiers, a noted author and seafarer, to sail the North Atlantic it was essential to gain knowledge of its wind and weather systems, its currents, and sailing secrets.[6] When a ship's master or seafarers were knowledgeable of these factors they were able to use the ocean's high winds to their advantage. The North Atlantic was known for its strong trade winds; winds so reliable in strength and direction that mariners depended on them to help steer their ships.[7] Seafarers and the passengers who travelled on sailing ships in the nineteenth century needed these winds to reach their markets and destinations in good time. However, these winds could also be dangerous. Their force on the surface of the water resulted in violent and irregular waves and in turn, often resulted in unexpected gales.[8] The North Atlantic was also known for its strong currents. These currents carried drifting pancake ice and icebergs into the shipping lanes where they could threaten any voyage well into spring and summer.[9]

One of the most dangerous features of the North Atlantic was the Gulf Stream. Feared by seafarers and fishermen alike, this ocean current was considered to be a curse

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[6] Alan Villiers, Wild Ocean: The Story of the North Atlantic and the Men Who Sailed It (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1957), p.5.

[7] Villiers, Wild Ocean, p.7.

[8] Eric Sager, Seafaring Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p.18.

[9] Sager, Seafaring Labour, p.16-17.

to westbound ships.[10] When the wind blew against the direction of the current, a violent sea rose which could capsize and wreck any ship.[11] When the warm waters of the Gulf Stream met the cold waters of the Labrador current off the coast of Newfoundland, at Cape Race,[12] its effects made North Atlantic seafarers and fishermen wary. Affected by what was known as an "indraught current,"[13] the physical environment around Cape Race was perilous.[14] As the cold Labrador and warm Gulf currents merged around the Cape, they set off a branch which swept to the west, swirled around the Cape, and traveled back to the main current once again. This swirling new current drove many vessels off course and closer to land, a problem which was exaggerated by the prevalence of fog in the area. These variable and uncharted currents, as well as the fog, were the cause of many shipwrecks. Between 1864 and 1904, approximately 2000 people lost their lives in more than 94 shipwrecks near Cape Race.[15] After the wreck of the *George Washington* and the

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[10] Villiers, Wild Ocean, p.21.

[11] Villiers, Wild Ocean, p.21.

[12] See "Map 1 - Trepassey," in Appendix 1. Drawn by Harold Fleet, Paradise, NF, 2002.

[13] See "A Fruitful Cause of Wrecks," The Evening Telegram, 24 November 1890, p.4 and "Cape Race to St. Vincent's (Special Section)," Decks Awash, Vol.10, No.3 (June 1981), p.7.

[14] Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume One (St. John's, NF: Newfoundland Book Publishers Ltd., 1981), pp.333-334 and Frank Galgay and Michael McCarthy, Shipwrecks of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume One (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications Ltd., 1987), p.1.

[15] See P.T. McGrath, "An Ocean Graveyard: Stories of Wrecks and Rescues of the Newfoundland Coast," McClure's Magazine, Vol.21 (June 1903), p.139, "Trap in the

loss of all on board on January 20, 1877, a survey of the area was conducted to determine what could be done to save other mariners from a similar fate.[16] The report acknowledged the dangers of the area, such as the fog and currents, but also suggested that sounding the depth of the water (which would advise mariners of their location in proximity to land) would be beneficial. According to the study, since the depth of water from Cape Race to Cape Pine was approximately thirty fathoms, a master who steered a course at a greater depth would significantly reduce the danger of his ship running aground.

Travelling a route which used the northeast trade winds meant travelling close to Cape Race.[17] While ocean currents and fog were often to blame for many of the shipwrecks which occurred around the Cape, human agency was also a factor. Many masters, especially foreigners who were not familiar with the area, were ignorant of the coastal and ocean currents and neglected to take soundings to determine their location.[18] In 1887 members of the British Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea, referring to shipping on the North Atlantic in general, stated that a master's misconduct or neglect

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Northern Sea," Literary Digest, Vol.44, No.18 (May 4, 1912), p.962, and Calvin Coish, Distant Shores: Pages From Newfoundland's Past (Grand Falls-Windsor, NF: Lifestyle Books, 1994), p.67.

[16] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume One, p.2. I was unable to locate either the survey or its citation. It was unfortunate that the authors did not cite their source for this information.

[17] See Sager, Seafaring Labour, p.19 for a map of sailing routes.

[18] Captain Thomas Fitzpatrick, "Wrecks and Their Causes," Shortis, Vol.2, No.391 (1916), p.1.

was often to blame for the stranding or collision of many ships.[19] They cited a master's omission to slacken his ship's speed in fog as one factor which contributed to incidents of shipwreck.[20]

1.2 Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World

During the nineteenth century Newfoundland's law-makers possessed the authority to locally enact and apply statutes, yet the colony was governed under British authority as well.[21] This meant that the passage of shipping legislation in Great Britain affected Newfoundland ships, fishermen, and seafarers. However, the relationship between Great Britain and Newfoundland was not just one of imperial influence, it was also one of imperial concern. Since many British seafarers and their ships were shipwrecked off the coast of Newfoundland, the British government became involved in the establishment or maintenance of lighthouses on the island. The British public's concern for safety at sea affected Newfoundland's fishermen and seafarers. When some members of Britain's middle class began to form philanthropic organizations for the benefit of seafarers and their families during the 1830's, so too did some Newfoundlanders.

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[19] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea," Parliamentary Papers (1887), XLIII, p.13.

[20] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea," p.13.

[21] See Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Two (St. John's, NF: Newfoundland Book Publishers Ltd., 1984), p.602 and Arthur Berriedale Keith, Responsible Government in the Dominions (London: Stevens and Sons, 1909), p.176.

1.2.1 Government/Shipping Legislation

Newfoundland's place and history as a British colony directly influenced its laws and regulations. From 1855, Newfoundland had a system of government known as Responsible Government. This system had two legislative branches: a lower (the House of Assembly) and upper (the Legislative Council) house.[22] Although Newfoundland's political leaders achieved some control of the colony's laws and regulations, they were not autonomous in their decision-making. Not only did any legislation have to be approved by both branches of government, it could not become law until it was approved by the government of Great Britain as well. Newfoundland controlled its own affairs, but the system of Responsible Government meant that absolute authority remained vested in the British Crown.[23] The Governor, who acted as the Crown's representative in Newfoundland, had to have the British government's approval of all measures before they could become law.

During the nineteenth century the British Government left the management of local vessels in colonial control and reserved to itself the right to control vessels on the high seas.[24] While the Newfoundland government was permitted to regulate shipping

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[22] Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.602. Also available on the Internet at http://enl.cuff.com/entry/42/ 42203.htm#RESPONSIBLE.

[23] Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.602. Keith, Responsible Government, p.176 also discusses the Crown's role and authority within Responsible Government.

[24] Keith, Responsible Government, p.193.

registered in the colony,[25] under Responsible Government the colony was subject to and governed by the Merchant Shipping Act as well.[26] According to Newfoundland statute, all sea-going ships registered in Newfoundland, their owners, masters, and crews, were subject in respect of shipping and discharge agreements, wages and effects, rights, remedies and penalties, to the laws of Great Britain concerning colonial British registered ships.[27] One such law involved the marking of a load-line (formally known as the Plimsoll Mark) on the sides of vessels.[28] In a letter to Newfoundland's Colonial Secretary dated 11 February 1890, it was stated that all members of the Newfoundland Constabulary were to look out for any people who did not mark their ship's load line according to standards established by the Merchant Shipping Act and report any discovery at once.[29] Although indicative of vigilance on the part of authorities, there was

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[25] See Sections 735 and 736 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, in Alexander Pulling, The Shipping Code. Being The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894 (57 & 58 Vict. C. 60.) With Introduction, Notes, Tables, Rules, Orders, Forms, and a Full Index (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1894), pp.288-9 and Keith, Responsible Government, pp.85-6.

[26] The Merchant Shipping Act consolidated all British shipping legislation in 1854 and again in 1894.

[27] Chapter 114 (of the Merchant Shipping Service and Desertion from the Royal Navy), Newfoundland, The Consolidated Statutes of Newfoundland, Second Series: Being a Consolidation of the Statute Law of the Colony, Down To and Including the Session of the Legislature in the Year 1892 (St. John's, NF: J.W. Withers, 1896), pp.876-7.

[28] Sections 436- 445 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894. See Pulling, The Shipping Code, pp.179-183. The campaign for a load-line will be discussed in the next section.

[29] Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador [PANL], Colonial Secretary. Incoming Correspondence, 1890-91, GN2/2 (Box 66, 1890), Letter from

no clear evidence which indicated if authorities actually prosecuted violators of this law. My research did not uncover any shipwreck in which the inappropriate placement of a load-line, and the subsequent overloading of cargo, was deemed to be the cause. It also did not uncover any court cases in which Newfoundland shipowners were prosecuted for violation of this law. Whether this meant that the law was followed vigilantly in Newfoundland or that violations were simply ignored by authorities is not known.

1.2.2 Philanthropic Societies

During the 1830's some philanthropists began to form private charities to address the needs of seafarers and their families in Great Britain.[30] The Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society was established in 1839 and enrolled more than 50 000 fishermen. Other charities were formed as well including the Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Shipwrecked Mariners, the Naval and Military Orphan Society, and the Seamen's Friend Society. It was not only the physical or economic welfare of seafarers for which members of these organizations were concerned, but also their spiritual welfare. Although some members recognized that the spiritual and moral improvement of the working classes could be best accomplished by improving the

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Newfoundland Constabulary, Bonavista, regarding enforcement of aspects of the Merchant Shipping Act, 11 February 1890.

[30] See Great Britain, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation and the Central Office of Information, Seafarers and Their Ships: The Story of a Century of Progress in the Safety of Ships and the Well-Being of Seamen (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955), p.49 and Rainer Baehre, Outrageous Seas: Shipwreck and Survival in the Waters Off Newfoundland, 1583-1893 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press for Carleton University Press, 1999), pp.33 & 221.

conditions in which they lived and worked,[31] others maintained a devotion to missionary work by distributing bibles and religious tracts to seafarers. Religious evangelicalism was apparent in many stories of shipwreck as people used religion as a means to explain why some lives were lost and others were spared by God. Stories about seafarers who lost their lives at sea, as well as stories told of shipwreck survival, usually prompted generous donations to such organizations.

Jon Press, in a study of nineteenth century British charities, stated that "spectacular disasters have always prompted the British conscience more effectively than chronic poverty or endemic disease."[32] According to Press, many Victorians displayed a genuine humanitarian concern for suffering which usually generated a compassionate response.[33] The collective Newfoundland conscience was also influenced by the loss of life and property caused by shipwreck. During the nineteenth century many Newfoundlanders took notice of, and were influenced by, the establishment of seamen's charities in Great Britain. By 1889, for example, the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariner's Royal Benevolent Society had provided assistance to an estimated 12,000 people in the colonies.[34] Although there is no evidence to indicate whether any Newfoundlanders received benefits from the charity, it is possible that some fishermen,

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[31] Jon Press, "Philanthropy and the British Shipping Industry, 1815-1860." International Journal of Maritime History, Vol.1, No.1 (June 1989), p.112.

[32] Press, "Philanthropy," p.107.

[33] Press, "Philanthropy," p.107.

[34] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.221.

seafarers, or their families (given that most residents of the colony were involved in all aspects of the fishery and shipping) were recipients of such benefits. In 1892 Newfoundland's Grenfell Mission was formed when Wilfred Grenfell was sent out from England by the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen to investigate the need for its services in Newfoundland and Labrador.[35] The mission was dedicated mainly to providing North Sea fishermen with medical aid and spiritual teaching.

The impetus for reform in the field of seamen's welfare in Great Britain during the nineteenth century came from humanitarian, middle-class groups.[36] Many people, including shipowners, used philanthropy as a means to reflect their standing in society. According to Press, Victorian philanthropy was rarely anonymous.[37] The names of those who contributed to societies, as well as the amount they contributed, were usually well-known in the community. Some shipowners used philanthropy as a means of gaining the respect of seafarers.[38] Seafarers and their families knew which shipowners contributed to their charities. These seafarers might then be more inclined to work for a shipowner who

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[35] See Grenfell, Sir Wilfred Thomason [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador On-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/43/4339.htm; Internet: accessed 18 July 2002 and Grenfell Association, International [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador On-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/43/4332.htm; Internet: accessed 18 July 2002.

[36] See David M. Williams, "Mid-Victorian Attitudes to Seamen and Maritime Reform: The Society for Improving the Condition of Merchant Seamen, 1867," International Journal of Maritime History, Vol.3, No.1 (June 1991), p.104 and Press, "Philanthropy," p.111..

[37] Press, "Philanthropy," p.108.

[38] Press, "Philanthropy," p.111.

was perceived as caring for their needs. By using philanthropy to their advantage, some shipowners were able to attract the best men for employment. According to Press, one of the most notable examples of the use of such philanthropy in Great Britain was by the Blackwall shipowner George Green.[39] By maintaining a sailor's home at Poplar at his own expense, Green was able to win the respect of many seamen. This resulted in a heavy demand for positions on his ships which then enabled him to take the pick of seamen. In most Newfoundland communities, it was also well-known who provided assistance to shipwrecked seafarers and their dependants. When the *Lois Jane* was lost in 1891, various Harbour Grace merchants, as well as Harbour Grace planters, fishermen, coopers, and carpenters, responded to the appeal for relief.[40] While Harbour Grace merchants might have used such philanthropy to their advantage, whether they did so disinterestedly or whether with a view to their reputation amongst a potential workforce must, for want of information, remain open to question.

Many Newfoundlanders took notice of how British charities operated. The formation, organization, and management of societies and charities in Newfoundland was similar to those in Great Britain. As was done in British communities, dances, plays, or bazaars were organized in many Newfoundland communities to raise money for

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[39] Press, "Philanthropy," p.111.

[40] Please refer to Chapter Five "Shipwreck, Its Impact on Harbour Grace" for a discussion of Harbour Grace's response to this shipwreck.

shipwreck widows and orphans.[41] Appeals for relief were made to the community on behalf of widows and orphans as well, such as those involving the *Lois Jane* in Harbour Grace, the *Maggie* in St. John's, and the *Puritan* in Greenspond in 1891, 1896, and 1900 respectively.[42] However, while many Newfoundlanders were influenced by the establishment of seamen's charities in Great Britain, they did not form seamen's charities in the colony. Instead, several charitable societies, with clearly identifiable denominational origins and membership requirements, were established. They included the Benevolent Irish Society, the Loyal Orange Association, and the Dorcas Society.

The Benevolent Irish Society was formed in 1806 and while open to all denominations of Christians, it required that each member be an Irishman or the descendant of an Irishman.[43] As a result, its membership turned out to be almost entirely Roman Catholic. The Loyal Orange Association was established in Newfoundland during the 1860's. The Association's first Orange Lodge, the Royal Oak, was organized in St. John's around 1863 by Dr. Thomas Leeming, a surgeon and naturalist from Prince

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[41] Some examples included the organization of a benefit by the Kickapoo Indian Troupe in 1891 to assist the widows and orphans of the crew of the *Lois Jane*. See The Harbor Grace Standard, 27 October 1891, p.4. There was also a benefit held at the Parade Rink in St. John's for the widows and orphans of the men lost on the *Greenland* in 1898. See "For Widows and Orphans," The Evening Telegram, 28 March 1898, p.4.

[42] For the circumstances surrounding the loss of the *Lois Jane* see Chapter Five, "Shipwreck, Its Impact on Harbour Grace". For the circumstances surrounding the loss of the *Puritan* and *Maggie* see Chapter Three, "Shipwreck, Its Impact on Newfoundland Communities".

[43] James M. Kent, "The Benevolent Irish Society [BIS]," The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol.1, No.4 (March 1902), p.13.

Edward Island.[44] Additional lodges were established in St. John's, Portugal Cove, Brigus, Carbonear, and Harbour Grace. In October 1824, a group of twelve Protestant women formed the Dorcas Society. Modeled after Dorcas of Acts 9 who 'did good works and alms deeds' and who 'sewed garments', the Society provided clothing and later, coal and fuel tickets, to the honest and industrious poor.[45] According to Press, charitable work was one of the few activities deemed respectable for middle-class women.[46]

Many of Newfoundland's societies used membership dues and funds generated at social functions to provide monetary or inkind assistance to members and their families in times of sickness and death. For example, to carry out their charitable activities, the Benevolent Irish Society used the annual fees of $4.00 paid by members, as well as voluntary donations.[47] Being a member of the Loyal Orange Association meant a man would receive financial help if he was sick and unable to work. Upon his death, his

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[44] Elinor Senior, "The Origin and Political Activities of the Orange Order in Newfoundland, 1863-1890," (St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of History, MA Thesis, 1959), pp.3-4 and E.G. Pomeroy, Souvenir Book of the 100th Anniversary of Orangeism in Newfoundland (St. John's, NF: Loyal Orange Association, 1963), p.31.

[45] See PANL, Dorcas Society Manuscript Collection, MG 614 (File #1 - Short History of Society) and St. David's Presbyterian Church, St. John's, Newfoundland, Bicentennial History Committee, The Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's, 1775-1975: A History of St. David's Presbyterian Church, St. John's, Newfoundland (St. John's, NF: Creative Publishers for Author, 1975), p.64.

[46] Press, "Philanthropy," p.112.

[47] Benevolent Irish Society (BIS), Centenary Volume. Benevolent Irish Society of St. John's, Newfoundland, 1806-1906 (Cork, Ireland: Guy & Co., 1906), p.13.

funeral expenses would be paid and his widow would receive "mortality fees".[48] If a seafarer or fisherman was a member of the Association, his widow would have been entitled to benefits. While these societies provided assistance to all members of the community, regardless of gender or denomination, there is no direct evidence that they assisted the families of shipwrecked seafarers in Newfoundland. If there was evidence of such contributions, unfortunately it might have been lost in the many fires which destroyed St. John's during the nineteenth century. The Orange Hall, for example, which housed all documents and correspondence of the Provincial Grand Lodge and the two St. John's Lodges of the Loyal Orange Association, was completely destroyed by the great fire of 1892.[49]

1.2.3 Lighthouses

During the nineteenth century the British government provided equipment and funding to the Newfoundland government to help them build more lighthouses. In 1836, when the Newfoundland government arranged to build a lighthouse at Cape Spear,[50] the British government provided equipment at a reduced cost. According to Newfoundland's Governor Cochrane, the colony received some equipment from Great Britain for what he considered a bargain price.[51] The British state sold a light apparatus, which had

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[48] Senior, "Orange Order, p.126.

[49] Senior, "Orange Order," p.iv.

[50] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p. 10.

[51] Lighthouses [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador On-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/54/5499.htm; Internet, accessed 22 June 2002.

previously served for twenty years at Firth of Forth (Scotland), for half its value to the Newfoundland government.[52]

More lighthouses were built to improve safety conditions for those who traveled off the coast of Newfoundland. During the nineteenth century, the Merchant Shipping Acts provided the British Board of Trade with the authority to assist colonies, including Newfoundland, with such initiatives. According to the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, the Board of Trade was permitted to raise funds for the construction or repair of any lighthouse and advance such funds to those colonies in need.[53] Cape Race was, as we have already seen, one of the most hazardous areas off the coast of the island. During the nineteenth century several preventative measures were put in place there.[54] These included the building of a lighthouse, in 1856, by the British Government's Trinity House, an equivalent of the modern-day coast guard. The cost incurred for the lighthouse at Cape Race, for the fog signal (installed in 1872), and for lighthouse keepers' dwellings was paid out of Great Britain's Consolidated Fund.[55] Through

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[52] Lighthouses [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador On-line].

[53] Section 670 and 674 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 in Pulling, The Shipping Code, pp.267-68. These sections were originally included in the Merchant Shipping Act 1855.

[54] See The Newfoundland Almanac: For the Year of Our Lord 1890-92 (St. John's, NF: W.J. Herder, 1889 & 1891), pp.40-1, 46, Joseph Prim, "Cape Race: A Barren Setting for History, Tragedy," Echo, Vol.3, No.3 (May 1979), p.14 (copied from the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Community Pamphlet File, "Cape Race"), and "Cape Race to St. Vincent's," p.7.

[55] See Great Britain, "A Bill To Provide For the Transfer to the Dominion of Canada of the Lighthouse at Cape Race, Newfoundland, and Its Appurtenances, and For

lighthouse dues, initially paid to the Board of Trade, the Consolidated Fund was reimbursed by 1886. This might be why the Cape Race lighthouse was transferred from the British to the Canadian government at that time.[56] The Newfoundland government declined to take over the costs and responsibility for the lighthouse. Although the British Government passed on this responsibility, its imperial concern remained apparent throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Additional offers of assistance were received by the Newfoundland government in 1897, when both Canadian and British officials argued for the need of a fog signal at Cape Pine.[57]

1.3 The Nineteenth Century

Seafaring has always been a dangerous occupation. During the early part of the nineteenth century there was an enormous loss of British life, ships, and cargoes. Every year between 1816 and 1818, almost 400 ships were stranded or wrecked and an average of over 700 seamen were lost.[58] By 1835, this figure had increased to almost 900 seamen.[59] While the British government passed its first in a series of Passenger Acts,

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Other Purposes Connected Therewith, " Parliamentary Papers (1886), I, p.461.

[56] See Great Britain, "A Bill To Provide For the Transfer to the Dominion of Canada of the Lighthouse at Cape Race," pp.461-3. For more information regarding the transfer and Canadian involvement in such Newfoundland safety measures see Malcolm MacLeod, "Canadian Aids to Newfoundland Navigation: Two Neighboring Countries Jointly Pursue Strategies For Secure Marine Communications," (St. John's, NF: The Centre for Newfoundland Studies, 1982), p.2, and Encyclopedia, Volume One, p.334.

[57] See section 4.5 "Safety At Sea," in chapter four.

[58] Great Britain, Seafarers and Their Ships, p.15.

[59] Great Britain, Seafarers and Their Ships, p.15.

designed to address the safety needs of passengers, as early as 1803,[60] it was not as forthcoming in placing restrictions on shipowners involved in the cargo trades. Early nineteenth century seafarers thus worked for shipowners who were neither limited by cargo restrictions nor ship requirements.[61] Owners were also not obliged to provide any form of life-saving appliances on board their ships at this time.

While problems of overloading, unseaworthy ships, and a lack of safety measures were well-known in the shipping industry during the 1830's, the British Government initially chose not to introduce legislation. Instead, in 1836, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to "inquire into the causes of the increased number of shipwrecks, with a view to ascertain whether such improvements might not be made in the construction, equipment and navigation of merchant vessels as would greatly diminish the annual loss of life and property at sea."[62] Shipowners James Ballingall and Henry Woodroffe, concerned about the number of seafarers being lost at sea and the state of the ships on which many seafarers travelled, gave evidence to the Committee. Ballingall, a ship surveyor and manager of the Kirkcaldy and London Shipping Company, was one of the first to state that the loss of so many ships was preventible. According to

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[60] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p. 281.

[61] Great Britain, Seafarers and Their Ships, p.11.

[62] See Great Britain, Seafarers and Their Ships, p.16 and Ronald Hope, A New History of British Shipping (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1990), p.279-80.

Ballingall, ships often sank because they were either poorly built or poorly maintained.[63] Shipowner Henry Woodroffe concurred with Ballingall, also stating that poor ship construction was responsible for several shipwrecks.[64]

While Ballingall and Woodroffe were referring to British ships, many examples of poorly constructed and poorly maintained ships could probably be found in Newfoundland as well. As was previously discussed, Newfoundland was subject to the laws of Great Britain and as such, many of the colony's shipowners followed similar practices as their British counterparts. While imperial authorities did little to protect fishermen and seafarers from working on unseaworthy ships during the early nineteenth century, they also failed to recognize that their lack of action compounded the daily economic and social situations of some Newfoundland fishermen and seafarers. By the late nineteenth century Newfoundland's fishery was organized along the basis of what was known as the truck system; a system whereby a merchant granted credit (ie. food, supplies, etc.) to a fisherman, who then repaid the merchant with his catch and received goods in return. Fishermen received only credit and goods, never cash. In many Newfoundland communities during the nineteenth century, some shipowners were also the merchants on whom fishermen and seafarers depended for their livelihood. Merchants controlled many aspects of fishermens' and seafarers' lives. Since the goal

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[63] Great Britain, "Select Committee on Causes of Shipwrecks," Parliamentary Papers (1836), XVII, pp.1 & 8.

[64] Great Britain, "Select Committee on Causes of Shipwrecks," pp.26-28.

was to make a profit, the lack of legislation governing what shipowners/merchants could and could not do meant they could risk the lives of those who worked for them without consequence.

An increasing number of shipwrecks during the first half of the nineteenth century made it apparent that the British government had not adequately addressed the dangers which seafarers faced. The inadequacy of their response to these dangers meant that others had to take responsibility for the safety of those working and travelling at sea. There was recognition on the part of some shipowners, philanthropists, and the general public of the hazards seafarers faced. During the 1830's Ballingall and Woodroffe were among the first members of the public to blame ship builders and owners for the increasing number of lives and cargo being lost at sea. At the same time, some philanthropic organizations were established to meet the needs of seafarers and their families. Throughout the nineteenth century residents of many Newfoundland communities buried shipwreck victims and assisted survivors.[65] All of these initiatives indicate that by the mid-nineteenth century there was a shift in the attitude toward shipping safety in the North Atlantic world. However, while humanitarian concerns were more evident and calls for increased imperial responsibility were more common, at the same time it was feared that over-regulation of the shipping industry would result in a loss of trade and profit. The debate over commercial success versus loss of life continued into the second half of the nineteenth century.

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[65] The chapters which follow provide numerous examples of such instances.

1.3.1 After 1850

According to Marcus Rediker, a historian of the eighteenth century, a full understanding of seafarers' lives at sea requires a broader social approach, one which considers both the natural and man-made dangers which influenced their lives.[66] Seafaring was not just a confrontation of man against nature, but also one of man against man. Politicians and Board of Trade officials had to balance the needs of seafarers with commercial aspects of shipping.

In 1850 the British government began its extensive involvement in the welfare of ships and seamen when it passed an "Act for improving the condition of Masters, Mates and Seamen and maintaining discipline in the Merchant Service".[67] This Act created a Marine Department of the Board of Trade, a department whose main purpose was to safeguard the safety of ships and the well-being of merchant seamen. The Act also allowed for, among other things, the compulsory examination of masters and mates, the issue of certificates of competency, the cancellation of such certificates, and the obligatory keeping of an official log.[68] In 1854 the British government consolidated all earlier legislation into the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854. Later more clauses were added to the Act, but loss of life and property from shipwreck continued to occur at an

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[66] Marcus Rediker's Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World. 1700-1750 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.5.

[67] See Great Britain, Seafarers and Their Ships, p.11-12 and Hope, British Shipping, p.287.

[68] Hope, British Shipping, p.287.

alarming rate.

There had been a noticeable shift in the expectations of politicians, shipowners, and the general public with regards to shipping safety during the 1850's, but in the 1870's commercial considerations were still apparent when members of the Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships investigated the use of deck cargos and their hazardousness to shipping.[69] While opinions varied as to what action the British government should take - ranging from placing restrictions on deck cargoes to no regulations whatsoever - there was agreement that any regulations which were applied only to British vessels would be detrimental to their ability to compete with foreign shipping. Despite the evidence presented to the Commission, its members made no recommendations with regards to deck loads. They stated, "..a merchant ship is a machine employed for earning freight, and we are of opinion that it would be unwise for the legislature absolutely to prohibit deck cargoes, except in the special case of the timber trade."[70] Any prohibition on deck cargoes would limit how much cargo the ship could carry and thereby affect the shipowner's profit. In 1873-4 commercial interests continued to outweigh considerations relating to the safety of crew. How did these factors play out in Newfoundland

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[69] See Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships," Parliamentary Papers (1874), XXXIV and David M. Williams, "State Regulation of Merchant Shipping 1839-1914: The Bulk Carrying Trades," in Charted and UnCharted Waters: Proceedings of a Conference on the Study of British Maritime History, eds. Sarah Palmer and Glyndwr Williams (London: The Trustees of the National Maritime Museum in association with the Department of History, Queen Mary College, University of London, 1981), p.61.

[70] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships," p.vii.

communities during the 1890's? Did some Newfoundland fishermen take unnecessary risks or go out to sea in adverse conditions because they felt pressured to catch a certain amount of fish? Were they trying to meet merchant, community, or possibly even family, expectations?

Enacting legislation which effectively protected seafarers' lives could be difficult. Sometimes the nature and extent of problems was unclear. For example, what constitutes excessive loading? There were also problems of enforcement to consider. Shipping was an international business and as such, all regulations had to be enforced in all ports at home and abroad. In addition, it was difficult to enforce legislation that, regardless of its intentions, still protected shipowners. For example, although the marking of a load-line on all ships was made compulsory in 1876, where it was placed remained the responsibility of the shipowner until 1890. This meant the line could be placed anywhere on the ship.

Scrutinizing the seaworthiness of ships would continue to be problematic throughout the nineteenth century. In 1887 a Royal Commission explored the impact which some shipping legislation had on loss of life at sea. Members of the Commission specifically examined the 1876 legislation which stated that it was a misdemeanor for any shipowner to knowingly send a ship to sea in such an unseaworthy state that the life of any person was likely to be endangered.[71] Members of the Commission determined that in spite of all the provisions made by Parliament and the enforcement of them by the

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[71] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea," p.10.

Board of Trade since 1876, there had been no decrease in the number of seafarers who lost their lives at sea.[72] Although the legislation was enacted to protect seafarers, much of it was difficult to enforce. In cases where shipowners were charged for negligence, juries were reluctant to deliver guilty verdicts because the Board of Trade had the power to detain unseaworthy vessels.[73] Since it was not detained it was either conclusive proof that the ship was safe or it justified sending it to sea because the shipowner believed it to be safe.[74]

During the 1860's and 1870's, as commercial concerns and inadequate legislation were ever-present, some people recognized that it was necessary for them to speak out. Like Ballingall and Woodroffe before them, James Hall and Samual Plimsoll were two individuals who began to take responsibility for those who worked and travelled at sea. During the 1860's James Hall, a shipowner and director of two insurance companies, campaigned for legislation to improve seafarers' lives at sea. The idea of placing a load-line on the hull of all ships - a line which would indicate a ship's maximum capacity of cargo for a safe voyage - was discussed at that time. In 1870, James Hall inspired Samuel Plimsoll, a member of Parliament, to take up the seamen's cause as well.[75] In 1873, in support of his campaign to improve the safety conditions of seafarers, Plimsoll published

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[72] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea," p.13.

[73] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea," p.14.

[74] Great Britain, "Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea," p.14.

[75] Hope, British Shipping, p.321.

Our Seamen. An Appeal. He believed that the hundreds of lives lost every year by shipwreck were lost from causes which were easily preventable.[76] Although one of his main concerns was the overloading of ships with cargo, he also addressed problems of undermanning, poor design, and defective construction. While shipowners, seafarers, and politicians knew well the pervasiveness of this practice, Plimsoll drew the general public's attention to unethical shipowners who over-insured their ships, deliberately overloaded them, then sent them to sea knowing they were unsafe. These ships were known as "coffin ships."[77] As they were narrow and deep, overloading them made them unsafe and unseaworthy. As part of his campaign, Plimsoll appealed to the sympathies of the community. He spoke of women losing their husbands, children losing their fathers, and the brave men who were subjected to the whim of a negligent shipowner.[78] His call was for people to help stop "this homicidal, this manslaughtering, this widow-and-orphan manufacturing system."[79] His polemic was a deliberate attempt to arouse the sympathies of the public, especially the middle class who organized philanthropic organizations.

From Plimsoll's perspective during the late nineteenth century, many women were seen as being dependent on their husbands and, if widowed, dependent on charity and the state. While this certainly was the case in some situations, several historians have

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[76] Samuel Plimsoll, Our Seamen. An Appeal (London: Virtue & Co., 1873), p.1.

[77] Plimsoll, Our Seamen, pp.53-4, 56.

[78] See Plimsoll, Our Seamen, pp.83-86.

[79] Plimsoll, Our Seamen, p.86.

established that women played a greater role in maritime communities, and in turn, in the family as well. Sean Cadigan's work on mid-nineteenth century Conception Bay in Newfoundland reveals women who played a role in the family economy by taking responsibility for the family gardens or by curing fish.[80] However, he also notes how the same women, especially those who became increasingly independent, were subject to physical abuse at the hands of their husbands. How then would the loss of the household's main breadwinner affect a woman and her family? Such family and community dynamics, as interpreted by academics, will be explored in chapter two.

1.4 Conclusion

How did British society move from one which was mainly concerned about the state of trade to one which was also concerned about the lives of seafarers who prosecuted that trade? Exploring the answer to this question not only shows how and why attitudes evolved throughout the nineteenth century, but also highlights how this evolution affected and influenced Newfoundlanders. Chapter one offers us a first glimpse of late nineteenth century Newfoundlanders' attitudes toward safety at sea and their response to shipwreck. The beginnings of change in Britain were apparent in 1836 when a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the causes of the increased number of shipwrecks. The Committee heard evidence from, among others, shipowners James Ballingall and Henry Woodroffe. While no legislation was established at that time, it was

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[80] See Sean Cadigan, Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

the first step in recognizing that unless the seaworthiness of ships improved, and unless some shipowners, and some seafarers, were more responsible, more lives would be lost. During the early part of the nineteenth century, a philosophy of laissez-faire prevailed which suggested that government should not become involved in any measures which constrained commerce.[81] By the 1890's, however, the British government was increasingly involved in shipping through the enactment of legislation. In 1894, a consolidating Merchant Shipping Act was added to the statute books. It consolidated all previous acts related to merchant shipping, repealing in whole or in part forty-eight earlier Acts and codifying the remaining legislation in 748 clauses and twenty-two schedules.[82]

Official interest in the safety of seafarers increased throughout the century. By the 1890's, the British public expected the government to listen to and address their concerns. At the same time, there was an awareness among some of Newfoundland's politicians, shipowners, and public that more needed to be done to address safety at sea. Newfoundlanders were affected by what was happening around them. The enactment of British legislation affected shipping in and around the island. The establishment of British philanthropic societies influenced the establishment of several charitable societies on the island. How did Newfoundland's place in the North Atlantic world influence its residents' response to shipwreck?

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[81] Hope, British Shipping, p.235.

[82] See Pulling, The Shipping Code, p.ix and Hope, British Shipping, p.346.

During the late nineteenth century Newfoundland's place as a British colony meant that Newfoundland fishermen and seafarers were protected by British legislation and they benefitted from the establishment of lighthouses and other safety measures. In Britain, this legislation was sometimes ambiguous and difficult to enforce. The Newfoundland government encountered similar difficulties when attempting to establish or enforce legislation. It had the right to establish a marine court of inquiry, yet there were times when, quite indiscriminately, it chose not to. Laws addressing legal and illegal salvage were on the books, yet they were not always enforced by local authorities. Living under an imperial authority was problematic when this authority lacked recognition of the everyday problems which faced Newfoundland fishermen, seafarers, and their families. It is by exploring the response to shipwreck in late nineteenth century Newfoundland communities that more can be learned about them and their economic and social organization.

Chapter 2: The Historiography - Newfoundland Communities and Shipwreck

Newfoundland's history is filled with stories of shipwreck and tragedy. Often they extend beyond the sea and into the communities of those involved. By exploring the response to shipwreck in late nineteenth century Newfoundland, more can be learned about the island's communities and the people who lived there. Some academics and amateur historians have written about nineteenth century Newfoundland communities. Historians such as Sean Cadigan and Rosemary Ommer have interpreted Newfoundland communities as ones where residents had to work together to survive.[83] Sociologist Barbara Neis and historian William Reeves note the diversity of Newfoundland communities.[84]

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the effects of shipwreck on Newfoundland communities have been dealt with in the literature. During the late nineteenth century the need to survive sometimes contributed to tensions in communities. Economic and social factors, such as the truck system and merchant domination, influenced how residents interacted with each other, but also influenced how

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[83] See Cadigan, Hope and Deception and Rosemary Ommer, "Rosie's Cove: Settlement Morphology, History, Economy, and Culture in a Newfoundland Outport," in Fishing Places, Fishing People: Traditions and Issues in Canadian Small-Scale Fisheries, eds. Dianne Newell and Rosemary Ommer (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

[84] Barbara Neis, "Familial and Social Patriarchy in the Newfoundland Fishing Industry," in Fishing Places, Fishing People and William Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum Reconsidered: The American Dimension in the Newfoundland Resource Development, 1898-1910," Newfoundland Studies, Vol.5, No.1 (1989).

they responded to the circumstances of shipwreck. How have such factors been interpreted in community and shipwreck studies? While some historians have confined their research to the impact of shipwreck at sea, others have attempted to reach beyond the event in order to determine its impact on the seafarer or fisherman's community, society, and culture. Arthur Johnson's study of the *Anglo Saxon*, Captain Joseph Prim and Mike McCarthy's examination of Labrador shipwrecks, and Rainer Baehre's collection of narratives show how residents of some Newfoundland communities were affected by shipwreck. The circumstances of shipwreck explored in this chapter - the burial of victims, the care of survivors, the salvage of cargo, the commemoration of tragedy in song - will advance our understanding of the diversity of nineteenth century Newfoundland towns and settlements,

2.1 Shipwreck Database

Research was conducted to determine the number of shipwrecks which affected Trepassey and Harbour Grace between the years 1890 and 1900.[85] I reviewed several sources, including the databases Ships and Seafarers of Atlantic Canada and the Northern Shipwrecks Database, both of which are available at the Maritime History Archives.[86]

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[85] I use the term "affected" to mean the effects of shipwreck on communities. Depending on the circumstances of a wreck, these effects might include, among others, the loss of a community's residents, unknown victims and survivors of shipwreck, or the salvage of cargo.

[86] The Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, Ships and Seafarers of Atlantic Canada (Computer Files), Vessel Registry Files (St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1998) and David Barron, Northern Shipwrecks Database (Computer File) (Bedford, NS: Northern Maritime Research, 1997).

Ship and shipwreck files, from the Centre for Newfoundland Studies and the Newfoundland Historical Society respectively, the Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1890-1901, as well as a variety of secondary sources, were also reviewed.[87] These sources were useful in determining the number of vessels wrecked, where they were wrecked and why, and the number of survivors or lives lost. I used this information to compile a database of shipwrecks which in some way affected Trepassey and Harbour Grace during the late nineteenth century.[88]

My research revealed 75 shipwrecks which occurred between 1890 and 1900 - 36 for Trepassey and 39 for Harbour Grace. The analysis of the data showed several significant factors. Shipwrecks along Trepassey's shores often involved foreign ships, meaning ships which were from other Newfoundland communities or other countries. By contrast, all 39 shipwrecks which affected Harbour Grace involved its ships or its

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[87] Also see Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Ship Files; Newfoundland Historical Society, Shipwreck Files; Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1890-1901 (St. John's, NF: Published by the Evening Telegram Office, 1890-97, 1900-01, by the Evening Herald Office in 1898, and by J.W. Withers in 1899); H.M. Mosdell, When Was That?: A Chronological Dictionary of Important Events in Newfoundland Down To and Including the Year 1922 (St. John's, NF: Trade Printers and Publishers Ltd, 1923); Richard White, "List of Wrecks on the Coast of Newfoundland to 31st December, 1903," (St. John's, NF: Herald Print Job, 1904); Frank Galgay and Mike McCarthy, Shipwrecks of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volumes One to Four (St. John's, NF: Volume One published by Harry Cuff Publications, 1987, Volumes Two to Four published by Creative Publishers, 1990, 1995 & 1997); and K.M. Coady, "Ships and Ship Owners in Hr. Grace, 1861-1889," (unpublished paper submitted for History 3110, Memorial University, 1973), printed by the Maritime History Group.

[88] See Lisa Wells, "Database of Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace," August 2001, in Appendix 2.

residents. They occurred mainly as ships were traveling to and from Labrador, to the ice floes, or throughout the North Atlantic. Many Harbour Grace women and children lost their husbands/fathers in these wrecks. However, of the wrecks which occurred in the Trepassey area, none involved ships or men from the community. This was a significant finding as stories and songs of wreck and rescue remain an important part of Trepassey's history and culture.[89] Although the evidence indicates that none of the community's residents lost immediate family members by shipwreck, loss of life from shipwreck was still a common occurrence around the community and this was one of the reasons why shipwreck held a prominent place in the community's history.[90]

My analysis of the data also showed that most shipwrecks occurred during the summer and autumn months, between June and December. While 25 of Trepassey's wrecks occurred during those months (14 wrecks between June and August, 11 wrecks between September and October), almost half of Harbour Grace's wrecks (17) occurred between September and December.[91] The prevalence of shipwrecks during the summer and autumn months might be partially explained by the lack of shipping activity during

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[89] See chapter four, section 4.3 "Cultural Impact" for a discussion of the stories and songs which have been passed down from generation to generation among residents of Trepassey.

[90] The circumstances surrounding each shipwreck and sources cited for them confirm that no Trepassey residents were lost in shipwreck between 1890 and 1900. There was also no reference to such a loss in any of the sources researched for this study.

[91] The time of year during which 12 of Harbour Grace's 39 wrecks occurred is unknown. Therefore, as it is based on the remaining 27 wrecks, this number (17) is even more significant.

the winter months. Ships travelling across the North Atlantic at that time of year were often hampered by poor weather conditions or ice. This meant fewer ships travelling off the shores of Trepassey and fewer Harbour Grace ships and men traveling across the North Atlantic. The analysis of the data also confirmed that many of the shipwrecks which affected Harbour Grace during the autumn months involved ships and residents who were travelling to and from Labrador for the fishery. The wrecks occurred either at Labrador or along the "Straight Shore" at locations such as Baccalieu Island, Stag Harbour, and Cape Freels.[92] The prevalence of shipwreck between September and December was understandable as this was the time of year during which many Harbour Grace ships, carrying fishermen and their families, fishing gear, and the season's catch, traveled back to the community from Labrador. It was also during that time that Harbour Grace ships and men traveled across the North Atlantic, on behalf of the merchants, to sell the season's catch at the European fish markets. The autumn months were a time of economic importance to the community, but also the time of year when sudden storms and gales plagued the Newfoundland coast. I will continue to explore the human and economic circumstances of shipwreck, and their impact on the community, throughout this study.

If 75 shipwrecks, which occurred between 1890 and 1900, affected residents of only two Newfoundland communities, how many shipwrecks occurred and subsequently

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[92] See "Map 2 - The Straight Shore," in Appendix 1, drawn by Harold Fleet, Paradise, NF, 2002.

affected other communities around the island? The studies of shipwreck which follow later in this chapter explore how the prevalence of shipwreck affected residents of the colony. However, it is not only the circumstances of shipwreck which are at the core of this study, but also Newfoundland communities. How have various writers discussed and interpreted aspects of nineteenth century Newfoundland communities in the literature?

2.2 The Concept of Community

Studies of nineteenth century Newfoundland communities concentrate on several themes - survival, cooperation, tension, and a sense of identity. These themes have been explored in various ways by Newfoundland historians. Life in Newfoundland during the nineteenth century was often difficult; sometimes people were brought close to starvation.[93] Difficulties have been commonly attributed to a decline in the colony's fisheries. Rosemary Ommer discusses this decline in her exploration of the Newfoundland fishery of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[94] According to Ommer, while the colony's population more than tripled, rising from approximately 52,000 in 1816 to 193,000 in 1884, the average catch of fish rose by only 43%.[95] With 82% of its

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[93] Rosemary Ommer, "One Hundred Years of Fishery Crises in Newfoundland," Acadiensis, Vol.23, No.2 (Spring 1994), p.14.

[94] See Ommer, "One Hundred Years."

[95] See Ommer, "One Hundred Years," pp.7-8 for a discussion of the population increase. See Canada, Censuses of Newfoundland, 1687-1869 (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor for the Department of Agriculture, Censuses of Canada 1665 to 1871, 1876), p.xliv and Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1891 (Volume One) (St. John's, NF: J.W.Withers, 1893), p.448 for population figures.

labour force working in the fishery,[96] there were simply too many people fishing who were, at the same time, using improved fishing gear such as the cod trap to catch more fish. To make matters worse, she argues, as too many people fishing meant too much fish, the resulting market surplus led to a decline in prices from $4.30 per quintal in 1889 to $3.72 per quintal in 1890.[97] The Bank fishery was not immune to problems during the nineteenth century. Earnings were poor and the Newfoundland banking fleet decreased from 330 vessels in 1889 to only 58 bankers in1894.[98]

How do historians think about Newfoundland communities given the importance of what the decline of the fishery brought to these communities in the 1890's? In his study of early to mid-nineteenth century Conception Bay, Sean Cadigan discusses the manner in which, as he puts it, the "dominance of the fishery shaped outport society."[99]

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[96] Ommer, "One Hundred Years," p.7-8.

[97] Ommer, "One Hundred Years," p.8 and Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers, "Colonial Reports - Newfoundland Annual Report for 1890," in Colonies: Canada, Volume 32 (Reports and Correspondence on Newfoundland Affairs and on Crofter Colonisation in Canada with Appendices, 1890-94) (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1968-1971), p.4.

[98] For more information regarding the decline in the bank fishery see Bruce Woodland, "Newfoundland Schooners Made History," Trade News, Department of Fisheries Canada, January 1959 (copied from PANL, Wilson Manuscript Collection, MG 839), p.3, Newfoundland, Annual Report for the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries For the Year 1894 (St. John's, NF: J.W. Withers, Queen's Printer, 1895), p.58 and Fred Winsor, "The Newfoundland Bank Fishery: Government Policies and the Struggle to Improve Bank Fishing Crews Working, Health, and Safety Conditions, 1876-1920"(St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of History, Ph.D Thesis, 1996), p.68.

[99] Cadigan, Hope and Deception, p.15.

People were competing with one another for the best fishing grounds or garden plots, yet the realization that there was never enough meant they had to work together. They became partners and worked together if their own families were impoverished and could not supply the much needed labour.[100] Such cooperation was also evident in the collective action undertaken by residents of many communities when early nineteenth century government policy concerning agriculture limited their ability to provide for their families.[101] When a depression in the fishery left many people starving in 1817, several of them broke into merchant stores in both Harbour Grace and Carbonear to obtain food and supplies.[102] According to Cadigan, while residents often disregarded authority when it came to getting food for their family, in this case military and civil authorities simply stood by and did not stop them.[103] Ommer and William Reeves also tell us that residents of nineteenth century Newfoundland communities had no choice but to work together if they wanted to survive. According to Ommer, a blend of individualism and community

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[100] Cadigan, Hope and Deception, p.42.

[101] Cadigan, Hope and Deception, pp.53-7. During the early nineteenth century there was some opposition to the provision of agricultural rights on the island, especially among those who advocated the continuation of a migratory fishery. While some officials supported the provision of agricultural rights to settlers as a means of ensuring both their survival and prosperity of the fishery, others remained reluctant to provide such rights for fear it would encourage a resident fishery on the island.

[102] Cadigan, Hope and Deception, p.57.

[103] Cadigan, Hope and Deception, p.57.

operated within outport cultures.[104] People had to strike the balance of protecting their own families and yet work with the community as a whole to survive. Reeves concurs stating that in many communities people had a consensual approach to the achievement of individual goals, usually one opposed to excessive ambition in the interests of community harmony.[105] While individual goals were important, they were not to outweigh the needs of the community.

By the late nineteenth century, as fishermen and their families struggled to preserve their way of life, a "strong sense of place,"according to Reeves was firmly established.[106] At the same time, according to historians Margaret Conrad and James Hiller, the stereotype of the "quaint but hardy Newfoundlander" became firmly fixed.[107] With survival being the ultimate goal, people had no choice but to adapt to their environment and work with it. However, problems in the fishery were a main source of economic and social tension in communities as residents disagreed, for example, over the use and effects of new technologies such as the cod-trap in the fishery.[108]

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[104] Ommer, "Rosie's Cove," Ommer created a generic outport, Rosie's Cove, as her surrogate for hundreds of settlements along the Newfoundland coast.

[105] Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum," p.4.

[106] Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum," p.4.

[107] Margaret Conrad and James Hiller, Atlantic Canada: A Region in the Making (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.159.

[108] For more information regarding the use of the cod-trap and how it might have affected social and economic relations during the late nineteenth century see Robert Sweeny, "The Social Trap: Technological Change and the Newfoundland Inshore Fishery," in Marine Resources and Human Societies in the North Atlantic Since 1500, ed.

Anthropologist Gerald Sider discusses the tensions involved in the organization of fishing and shore crews during the nineteenth century family fishery.[109] According to Sider, family members were often pulled in different directions.[110] He discusses how a fisherman who always fished in partnership with his brother might have to stop fishing with him when his son became an adult. According to Sider, if the fisherman's brother either had no sons of his own, or he did but they were not yet grown, the brother might have had no where to turn for partners.[111] While the fisherman's actions were deemed acceptable in the community, they still sometimes created tensions among families and residents. These tensions, however, could often be eased by residents' moral values and what Sider identifies as a moral economy. If a fisherman needed a berth, a crew would take him on even though it meant a decline in income for them. The community came first and residents were expected to help those in need. According to Sider, the moral economy served to lessen tensions in the community as it maintained egalitarian relations among outport fishing families.[112]

In chapter one I referred to the control many merchants had over fishermen's and

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Daniel Vickers (St. John's, NF: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995), pp.295-309.

[109] See Gerald Sider, Culture and Class in Anthropology and History: A Newfoundland Illustration (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Mumming in Outport Newfoundland (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1977).

[110] Sider, Mumming, p.12.

[111] Sider, Mumming, pp.12-13.

[112] Sider, Mumming, p.14.

seafarer's lives. During the mid-nineteenth century, fishermen were economically dependent on merchants who could send them to sea in unseaworthy ships and in adverse weather conditions. Although the 1890's saw an increase in safety initiatives, fishermen in many Newfoundland communities remained dependent on merchants. While the organization of Newfoundland's fishery evolved throughout the nineteenth century the truck system continued to be used and in many communities merchants exercised a controlling presence. According to Sider, the domination of merchants was sometimes so severe that it permeated all aspects of residents' social lives and economic activities.[113] Many fishermen, due to the financial limitations placed on them by merchants, could only afford small-scale equipment. Through such restrictions, merchants were able to limit the size of a fisherman's catch and thereby control the economic welfare of many fishing families.

These factors must have had some effect on how residents responded to shipwreck. Did the merchant's control over fishermen encourage the men to take unnecessary risks at sea? Did the decline of the fishery influence fishermen to take risks? Did tensions among family members or among residents affect how people responded to shipwreck? Diversity existed both within and among communities. This was significant. In her study of families and the Newfoundland fishing industry, sociologist Barbara Neis[114] discusses how community structure differed from one

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[113] Sider, Culture and Class, pp.27-8.

[114] Neis, "Familial and Social Patriarchy."

community to another in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Neis, there were significant differences in the technologies used to fish, and differences too in the combination of fishing with other activities, periods of male absenteeism, and the sexual division of labour.[115] Her analysis of the community is supported by Reeves. According to Reeves, overall social cohesion was difficult in Newfoundland as each settlement offered a different texture - its own peculiar arrangement of sea, landscape, fishing grounds, and fishing techniques.[116] If communities were in fact diverse, was their residents' response to shipwreck also diverse? If so, what does this reveal about community dynamics, especially as these dynamics were involved with the response to shipwreck?

2.2.1 Sample Community Studies

Newfoundland fishermen and their families experienced periods of both prosperity and decline throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historians, writers, and the general public have debated the problems in the fishery and its impact on rural Newfoundland. When inshore catches declined in the 1980's[117] and a moratorium on the fishery was announced in 1992, academics and the general public alike wondered how rural communities would survive. As a result, there are now more studies which

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[115] Neis, "Familial and Social Patriarchy," p.36.

[116] See Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum," p.4.

[117] Noel Roy, The Newfoundland Fishery: A Descriptive Analysis [article online]; available from http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~noelroy/NfFishery.text.html; Internet: accessed 31 May 2002.

focus on communities and how certain events affect its residents.[118] It was also during the 1980's and 1990's that writers increasingly focused on the histories and stories of various Newfoundland communities. Several amateur historians have studied the histories of a variety of towns and settlements in Newfoundland. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, residents of many Newfoundland communities worked in industries other than the fishery, such as the timber or mining industries, where the potential for accident and death was also ever present. Communities such as Grand Falls, Corner Brook, and Bell Island, where residents were involved in these industries, have been extensively studied and written about.[119] I chose to limit this examination of literature to that on coastal communities where fishing or seafaring was the main occupation.

Two studies which document the importance of the Bank fishery on the south

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[118] Research projects such as "Coasts Under Stress" are influential in moving us in new directions. The goal of this project is to, "identify the important ways in which changes in society and the environment in coastal British Columbia and coastal Newfoundland and Labrador have affected, or will affect, the health of people, their communities and the environment". See the project's website at http://coastsunderstress.ca. Several of the academics involved in this project, including sociologist Barbara Neis, are conducting extensive research on how the closure and/restructuring of the fishery has affected some Newfoundland towns and settlements.

[119] For a history of Grand Falls see A. Dymond, "Study of the History of Grand Falls," (unpublished paper submitted for History 321, Memorial University, 1969, printed by the Maritime History Group). For a history of Corner Brook see Harold Horwood, Corner Brook: A Social History of a Paper Town (St. John's, NF: Breakwater Books, 1986). For a history of Bell Island see Gail Weir, The Miners of Wabana: The Story of the Iron Ore Miners of Bell Island (St. John's, NF: Breakwater Books, 1989). See also Company Towns [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador On-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/26/2674.htm; Internet: accessed 22 June 2002.

coast are Garfield Fizzard's Unto the Sea: A History of Grand Bank and Ena Farrell Edwards' St. Lawrence. In the 1980's Fizzard and Farrell Edwards documented the histories of the Burin Peninsula communities of Grand Bank and St. Lawrence, respectively, and discussed each community's involvement with the fishery on the Grand Banks. Fizzard offers a detailed history of Grand Bank, starting with the arrival of French settlers in 1714 and documents the development of the bank fishery and the community's leading role in it.[120] Farrell Edwards discusses the role of the bank fishery in St. Lawrence and devotes a chapter to disaster at sea. According to Farrell Edwards, "the men of St. Lawrence were always aware of the closeness of death while battling the elements or helplessly watching as dory mates went under, or waiting for the ships that never came in."[121]

While Fizzard and Farrell Edwards focus on the south coast of the island, Bob Codner's The History of Torbay documents the history of a small community north of St.

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[120] Garfield Fizzard, Unto the Sea: A History of Grand Bank (Grand Bank, NF: Grand Bank Heritage Society, 1987), p.112.

[121] Ena Farrell Edwards; with Richard Buehler, St. Lawrence (St. John's, NF: Breakwater Books, 1983), p.45. While my discussion focuses mainly on the effects of the fishery and shipwreck on the community, residents of St. Lawrence were also involved in mining during the twentieth century. Other writers have documented the impact mining and its hazards had on workers in the community. See Richard Rennie, "'And there's nothing goes wrong': Industry, Labour, and Health and Safety at the Fluorspar Mine, St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, 1933-1978" (St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of History, Ph.D Thesis, September 2001) and Rennie Slaney, More Incredible Than Fiction: The True Story of the Indomitable Men and Women of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland From the Time of Settlement to 1965: History of Flourspar Mining at St. Lawrence, Newfoundland (Montreal: La Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux, 1975).

John's. Codner discusses the dangers of living and working at sea and notes that while Torbay fishermen generally knew their limitations, there were many caught unaware by the forces of nature.[122] From examples of children accidently falling from cliffs while picking dandelions to a dead body and parts of a wreck washing ashore, Codner vividly describes the tragedy which surrounded a seafaring community in Newfoundland.

The Story of Trinity and Prime Berth: An Account of Bonavista's Early Years are community studies which concern two of Newfoundland's most prominent nineteenth century communities.[123] In his 1997 study of Trinity, Gordon Handcock states that "maritime trade was the key element in Trinity's social and economic history."[124] In Prime Berth, written in 1993, Bruce Whiffen documents Bonavista's close ties to the sea, maintaining that the community's significance in Newfoundland history is due to its fishing industry. He states that due to its commitment to the fishery, the community maintained a position of significance as it grew throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[125] Since both of these community studies are extremely detailed, it is surprising that the authors, while emphasizing their respective community's association with all aspects of maritime trade and the fishery, make little mention of shipwreck in

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[122] Bob Codner, The History of Torbay (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications Ltd., 1996), p.40.

[123] See Gordon Handcock, The Story of Trinity (Trinity, NF: Trinity Historical Society, 1997) and Bruce Whiffen, Prime Berth: An Account of Bonavista's Early Years (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications Ltd., 1993).

[124] Handcock, Trinity, pp.3-4 and p.47.

[125] Whiffen, Prime Berth, p.11.

their studies. Handcock does make some mention of tragedy, such as the February 1892 loss of over 25 men when they were stranded on the ice in a blizzard while sealing, but it is listed as an event of importance with no further detail.[126]

In To Learn About Our Heritage, amateur historians Debbie Pennell and Jerome Kennedy provide a history of Trepassey and the people who lived there.[127] They tell readers about the discovery and early settlement of the community, as well as the impact of twentieth century events on it, such as the Depression, World War Two, and Confederation. The authors also discuss early government initiatives in the community, such as the building of roads and the opening and closing of a telegraph line in the town.[128]

The circumstances of shipwreck are considered to be an important part of the community's history and they are discussed in detail by Pennell and Kennedy. Using a variety of sources which ranged from oral interviews and newspapers to the Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland, the authors were able to compile a list of shipwrecks which affected the community. They interviewed residents as well and it was while they were talking with Daniel Pennell Sr. in 1975 that an "amazing legend" of

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[126] See "Chronology of Selected Historical Events," in Handcock, Trinity, p. 64.

[127] Debbie Pennell and Jerome Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage (Trepassey, NF: The Opportunities For Youth Programme, Manpower and Immigration, 1975). The authors acknowledged they were neither professional writers nor editors in the book's "Forward".

[128] The telegraph line opened in 1856 only to close three years later and be transferred to Cape Race.

Trepassey Bay was revealed.[129] According to Pennell, the S.S. *Heligoland* went ashore near St. Shotts in September 1903. While many of the men from Peter's River and St. Shotts witnessed the wreck, they were unable to save the crew because it was impossible to lower a small boat into the raging waters below. The onlookers saw a seaman climb the foremast of the ship. He seemed to be yelling something, but they could not hear him. He clung to the mast as the ship went further under. As Pennell and Kennedy reported it the account continued,

> since it was obvious to the young seaman that it was impossible for him to be rescued, he contented himself to stay there. Putting his hand in his pocket, he took out a piece of tobacco, bit a piece off and began to chew. Bit by bit the mainsail began to collapse. Then as the vessel reclined into the sea, the man threw the rest to the wind as everything under him collapsed and crashed into the waters. Down with the boat went the seaman to Davy Jones' Locker.[130]

In my research I have been able to document this incident. According to the Evening Telegram of January 13, 1900, "The last man, after a desperate struggle, was washed off at one pm ..... he fought gallantly and swam round the ship several times. Men from Holyrood and Peters River, prepared with ropes, etc., found it impossible to render any assistance."[131] In Trepassey the circumstances of this shipwreck were passed down from generation to generation so they would not be forgotten.[132]

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[129] Pennell and Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage, p.37.

[130] Pennell and Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage, p.37.

[131] See "The Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 13 January 1900, p.4.

[132] For more information about how and why stories such as this were preserved in Trepassey's history and culture see chapter four "Shipwreck, Its Impact on

Many of the community studies discussed provide information about a town or settlement's history, but unless shipwreck is a prominent feature of an already documented history, its occurrence is usually not explored in detail. Although the importance of the fishery is at the centre of all studies, none of the writers, with the exception of Handcock who explored the social and economic structure of Trinity's population,[133] delve further into aspects of Newfoundland communities. This does not mean that these studies are not valuable. Their purpose is to preserve the history and stories of a particular community. This was especially so at a time when the loss of the fishery threatened the very existence of some Newfoundland communities. Notwithstanding their importance, what is lacking from such studies demonstrates that there are more things yet to be learned about Newfoundland communities. It is through shipwreck, and the response of Newfoundland's fishing and seafaring residents to it, that historians can learn more about Newfoundland communities. The response to shipwreck offers some insight into how communities were organized, economically and socially. It facilitates exploration of a woman's role in the family and community. Many Newfoundlanders were aware of the colony's place in the North Atlantic world. They were aware of their responsibilities towards other mariners. A study of residents'

Trepassey", section 4.3 "Cultural Impact".

[133] See Handcock, Trinity, p.3 for a discussion of the Trinity's social structure. Handcock also discussed how he felt the character of Trinity, both as a settlement and a community, was influenced by entrepreneurs, such as merchants and traders. See Handcock, Trinity, p.41.

response to shipwreck helps us understand some of the ideas they held about shipping, safety at sea, the fishery, and state responsibility in the nineteenth century. It moves us too into the realm of community values.

2.3 Studies of Newfoundland Shipwrecks

Most Newfoundlanders, whether fishermen, seafarers, or their families, in some way faced the hostile environment of the North Atlantic daily. Fishermen and seafarers confronted the elements in order to provide for their families; some women took care of the household and their children while their husbands were away. How did the occurrence of shipwreck affect their lives and their communities? The circumstances of shipwreck - loss of life, incidents of legal and illegal salvage, and safety concerns - as well as the commemoration of such circumstances in song, are discussed in a variety of shipwreck studies.

2.3.1 Narratives

In Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters, published in 1974, Keith Huntress discusses the appeal of published narratives which tell stories of shipwreck, loss, and survival.[134] He concludes that although adventure and suspense are important features, there are more reasons for the popularity of such narratives.[135] Tales of shipwreck might teach religious or moral lessons as survivors often felt they were predestined to live

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[134] Keith Huntress, Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters, 1586-1860 (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1974).

[135] Huntress, Narratives of Shipwrecks and Disasters, p. xvi-xvii.

through shipping tragedies. Such tales might also alert the general public to the need for better ships, navigational aids, and lifeboats.

How have historians written about and analyzed shipwreck? Some simply give their readers facts, rather than analysis. J.P. Andrieux's Marine Disasters of Newfoundland and Labrador (1986), Rosalind Power's, A Narrow Passage: Shipwrecks and Tragedies in the St. John's Narrows (2000), and Robert Parsons' Survive the Savage Sea (1998) provide accounts of shipwrecks.[136] While the authors sometimes discuss the circumstances surrounding the salvage of cargo or the establishment of safety measures, rarely do their books take the reader or historian into the community. Rainer Baehre's review of Parson's Survive the Savage Sea, for example, states that when such information is included in Parson's book, it is often only discovered by the "careful reader."[137] Parsons chose not to examine the impact of disasters on communities. His intention was to document and preserve the stories of some shipwrecks and vessels abandoned at sea. He admits that his book "merely scratches the surface and leaves as much unsaid as said."[138]

Using newspapers, supplemented and cross-referenced with information from

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[136] See J.P., Andrieux, Marine Disasters of Newfoundland and Labrador (Ottawa, ON: O.T.C. Press Ltd., 1986), Rosalind Power, A Narrow Passage: Shipwrecks and Tragedies in the St. John's Narrows (St. John's, NF: Jeff Blackwood & Associates, 2000), and Robert Parsons, Survive the Savage Sea: Tales From Our Ocean Heritage (St. John's, NF: Creative Publishers, 1998).

[137] Rainer Baehre, "Review of 'Survive the Savage Sea: Tales From Our Ocean Heritage,'" The Northern Mariner, Vol.IX, No.3 (July 1999), p.86.

[138] See the Foreword in Parsons, Survive the Savage Sea.

personal interviews, diaries, and gravestones, Parsons does delve further into the community in Lost At Sea (Volume One), published in 1991.[139] He states that, "all along the coast, people were caught up in the agony or intense suspense of death or rescue from the sea, recovering bodies from the boiling surf or gleefully salvaging goods from wrecked schooners near the shore."[140] Residents of many Newfoundland communities often buried unknown bodies which washed ashore and at the same time, benefitted from salvaging a wrecked ship's cargo. Parson's deliberate use of contradictory phrases- the agony of death yet gleeful salvage of cargo - conveys the ambivalence many residents experienced when a ship was wrecked along the shore of their community. On the one hand, a person (or persons) had died and residents had to face the task of recovering and burying bodies. On the other hand, shipwrecks were economic godsends to some communities and many residents benefitted from their occurrence. The salvage of a wrecked ship's cargo provided families with food, clothing, and other items, especially when times were hard.[141]

Arthur Johnson is another author who shows how people were affected by shipwreck. He was a Newfoundland businessman, politician, and amateur historian who researched and wrote The Tragic Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon* in 1963, but did not publish

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[139] Robert Parsons, Lost At Sea (Volume One) (St. John's, NF: Creative Publishers, 1991).

[140] Parsons, Lost At Sea, p.xi.

[141] The burial of bodies, as well as the economic benefits of shipwreck, will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

it.[142] It was not until 1995 that his son Paul Johnson edited his father's manuscript for publication. Using the official Board of Trade Enquiry into the loss of the vessel (which included the testimony of survivors), as well as newspaper interviews, Johnson was able to reconstruct the events surrounding the loss of the *Anglo Saxon*, a ship belonging to the Allan Line. Rainer Baehre praises Johnson's work for "a wealth of detail that transcends any mere romantic or tragic interpretation of a shipwreck."[143] Johnson spells out the horrors clearly enough, but instead of focusing only on the tragedy, the loss of life and the widows and orphans left behind, Johnson delves further into other matters. He questions the guilt and responsibility of both the Allan Line and the *Anglo Saxon's* crew. According to Johnson, the record of the Allan Line was "atrocious" as nine of its twelve ships were lost between 1857 and 1864 by shipwreck yet the official inquiry made no reference to this record.[144] Johnson also questions whether the ship's crew could have saved more passengers. Five out of six crew members were saved, while only four out of six first class passengers and two out of six steerage passengers were saved.[145]

The human involvement in shipwreck is also evident in Captain Joseph Prim and Mike McCarthy's The Angry Seas, published in 1999. While both are amateur historians,

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[142] Arthur Johnson and Paul Johnson, The Tragic Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*, April 27th 1863 (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications, 1995), tribute.

[143] Rainer Baehre, "Review of 'The Tragic Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*,'" The Northern Mariner, Vol.VI, No.2 (1996), p.83.

[144] Johnson, Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*, pp.9 & 89.

[145] Johnson, Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*, p.91.

Captain Prim served as master of various ships for almost 25 years and Mike McCarthy has a M.Lit. and has written several books on shipwrecks and local folklore. Through examples of destruction of property and death, Prim and McCarthy combine their seafaring and academic experience respectively to examine the community's response to some shipwrecks which occurred on the coast of Labrador. Many of the tales they collected centre around some of the "Great Labrador Gales." They tell us, for example, that the gale of October 9, 1867 was "perhaps the worst storm ever experienced on the coast of Labrador in terms of wrecked ships, death and destruction of coastal property."[146] This enables readers to understand that a shipwreck does not have to be of "Titanic" proportions in order to be considered a great loss to a family or community. When the schooner *Goodwill* and her entire crew of five men was lost in September 1900, it was a tragedy which devastated their families and Western Arm, their small community. Moreover, two of the men were brothers and all were married with children. Prim and McCarthy quote a letter, written to the Evening Telegram on October 6, 1900, which reminded people, "that there can be no greater disappointment in life than to hear that our fishermen....close at the door with the means of subsistence for their wives and children.....will never more return."[147] Mr. J.W.B of Musgrave Harbour wrote this letter so he could extend his sympathy to the families, but also tell the story of the wreck. Like

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[146] Captain Joseph Prim and Mike McCarthy, The Angry Seas: Shipwrecks on the Coast of Labrador (St. John's: Jesperson Publishing, 1999), p.33.

[147] Prim and McCarthy, The Angry Seas, p.77.

Johnson, Prim and McCarthy use the words of people living in nineteenth century Newfoundland communities to convey the impact and sadness of such a loss.

The use of oral accounts is characteristic of other Newfoundland studies. In Outrageous Seas, an edited collection of shipwreck narratives published in 1999, historian Rainer Baehre argues that the influence of the sea has left a deep cultural imprint in Newfoundland and Labrador.[148] Insights can be got from shipwreck and disaster narratives.[149] The narratives collected by Baehre provide us with some insight into the reactions of both government and the community towards survivors and serve to exemplify how people and communities come together to help the victims of disasters.[150] The narratives were mainly written by survivors and their own words tell of the events and tragedy.

Michael Harrington's Sea Stories From Newfoundland is another set of shipwreck narratives which provides some insight into the community.[151] First published in 1958 by the Ryerson Press in Toronto, this revised edition of 1986 includes the results of additional research. Harrington collected and edited several accounts of shipwrecks which occurred around Newfoundland during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A distinguished author, editor, and amateur historian, Harrington addresses a number of

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[148] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.1.

[149] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.1.

[150] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.15.

[151] Michael Harrington, Sea Stories From Newfoundland (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications Ltd., 1986).

topics including shipwrecks, rescues, and community involvement. He wrote about the people of Cat Harbour who, in 1868, looked after the shipwrecked men from the Harbour Grace brigantine *Adamant* until the coastal steamer arrived to pick them up.[152] He also documents some well-known stories in Newfoundland's maritime history, such as the *Queen of Swansea* wreck at Gull Island in 1867, as well as the heroics of George and Ann Harvey who, in the early nineteenth century, saved more than one hundred people from the wreck of the *Dispatch.* Harrington's book provides historians with numerous examples of shipwreck and of their impact on the community. However, the book's lack of references limits its usefulness.

Any discussion of shipwreck narratives could not be complete without mentioning Frank Galgay and Michael McCarthy's Shipwrecks of Newfoundland and Labrador.[153] Their four volume work tells the stories of shipwrecks off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Using newspapers as their main source, Galgay and McCarthy discuss each wrecked ship's origin and destination; giving details of its captain, crew, and passengers (if any), as well as considering the causes of each shipwreck and documenting any rescue efforts that were made.[154] The authors discuss the loss of life caused by many shipwrecks; issues of

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[152] See Chapter 10, "A Time For Decision," in Harrington, Sea Stories, pp.89-97.

[153] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volumes One to Four.

[154] Melvin Baker, "Review of 'Shipwrecks of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Three,'" Canadian Book Review Annual 1995, ed. Joyce Wilson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p.450.

salvage, and the establishment of funds to aid the families of shipwreck victims. For example, the 1872 wreck of the *Huntsman* off Battle Harbour, Labrador and the deaths of 44 men on board, encouraged the public to make contributions for the support of widows and orphans left behind.[155] It was clear that what was needed was a permanent fund to help all victims of marine disasters.[156]

In Volume Four Galgay and McCarthy discuss the wreck of the *Lantana* at Shag Rock (between Peter's River and St. Shott's), St. Mary's Bay in 1891.[157] This shipwreck helped residents press their claims for a lighthouse in the area. Father O'Driscoll, the priest who buried three of the victims, spoke strongly for the need for a lighthouse on Shag Rock shore, which he felt might have prevented the accident. According to Galgay and McCarthy, Dr. Carey, the magistrate in Trepassey, also supported the need for a lighthouse. They stated that,

> This wreck, with its broken battered bodies that had to be carried up over a cliff to be buried, was the final straw for Dr. Carey. In his letter to the Daily Colonist[158] he pointed out the need for a lighthouse on Gull Island and in graphic language described the horrendous

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[155] See Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Three, pp. 75-82.

[156] See Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Three, pp. 75-82.

[157] This shipwreck has been previously researched and is discussed in detail in chapter four of this thesis.

[158] While the newspaper was a daily publication, it was most commonly known as The Colonist. For helpful information regarding what newspapers were available at a specific time in Newfoundland history see Suzanne Ellison, Historical Directory of Newfoundland and Labrador Newspapers, 1807-1996 (St. John's, NF: Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997).

task of burying the shipwrecked dead.[159]

However, my review of The Colonist article reveals they are mistaken in their attribution. This was not a letter written by Dr. Carey; rather these were the words of Michael Lundrigan, the man who discovered the wreck of the ship.[160] This letter is more meaningfully interpreted when we know it came first hand from a witness to the wreck. It is all the more important because of the rarity of documentation of Newfoundland's poorer classes. I shall have more to say about this letter in chapter four.

2.3.2 Salvage of Cargo

During the late nineteenth century the process of legal salvage in Newfoundland began with the appointment of a Commissioner of Wrecks (often known as a Wreck Commissioner) whose task it was to travel to the scene of shipwrecks within his designated area and take charge of the situation.[161] Residents were usually involved in salvage operations when the commissioner requested their assistance in saving lives or cargo. To legally salvage cargo, salvors could only go on the ship with permission of the

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[159] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four, p.69.

[160] See "Wreck of the Brigt. *Lantana*," The Colonist, 13 January 1891, "The *Lantana* Tragedy," The Evening Herald, 12 January 1891 (written by William Lundrigan) and "Wreck of Brigt. *Lantana*," 13 January 1891. It was the letter written by Lundrigan to the Evening Herald which is quoted by Carey in The Colonist article. There also seems to be some confusion regarding Mr. Lundrigan's first name. While both The Colonist, 13 & 24 January 1891 and Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, stated the man's name as Michael Lundrigan, The Evening Herald, 12 & 24 January 1891, stated it as William Lundrigan.

[161] See Encyclopedia, Volume Five, p.636-37. The permission of the master or owner of the ship is required for the wreck commissioner to take over. See Chapter 122 (Of Wreck and Salvage), Newfoundland, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.904.

master or Wreck Commissioner and then must turn over any items, any "wreck", in their possession to the Wreck Commissioner.[162] The person who recovered cargo was then entitled to make a claim for salvage. According to statute, services rendered by any person in saving any wreck were to be rewarded by the owner of such vessel, a "reasonable amount of salvage, including expenses properly incurred."[163] As fishermen often risked their lives by salvaging cargo in severe weather, the rule usually followed was that "the more hazardous the conditions the greater the share fishermen were allowed to keep."[164] One case exemplifying this was the wreck of the steamer *Texas* near Trepassey in June 1894. The ship's cargo was almost entirely immersed under water. A three-way division between the wreck commissioner, underwriter, and salvors was the norm in many salvage situations. However, the salvage agreement to recover the cargo of the *Texas*, in recognition of the risk, was made on the halves (half of the salvage, or an equivalent amount thereof, was granted to the salvors).[165]

The illegal salvage of cargo was known as "wrecking" in the Newfoundland context,[166] but the more widely accepted definition also implies wreck-inducing - the

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[162] See Chapter 122, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.905.

[163] Chapter 122, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.909.

[164] Encyclopedia, Volume Five, p.637.

[165] This example is explored further in chapter four, "Shipwreck, Its Impact on Trepassey". The process of legal salvage and salvors' awards is explored through a variety of other examples in chapter four, as well as in chapter three, "Shipwreck, Its Impact on Newfoundland Communities".

[166] See Encyclopedia, Volume Five, p.636-37.

deliberate destruction of ships. There is no clear evidence of any such activity in Newfoundland.[167] To avoid any confusion, with this other and more problematic activity, I will simply refer to the activity as illegal salvage. There were several offences listed in the statute with respect to illegal salvage.[168] They included impeding the rescue of people or cargo, boarding a shipwrecked vessel without permission, and obtaining or trying to sell any wreck which had not been turned over to the wreck commissioner first. A person found guilty of such offences forfeited any claim to salvage and, depending on the severity of the offence, was either liable to pay a penalty double the value of such wreck or was charged and could face possible imprisonment.[169]

My investigation of the legal and illegal salvage of cargo shows the differing viewpoints which sometimes existed between members of the Newfoundland government and residents. The norms followed in some Newfoundland communities did not always correspond to the laws of the colony. My research revealed that in late nineteenth century Trepassey people in the community not only helped shipwrecked seafarers, but also helped themselves by salvaging the cargo of vessels wrecked along their shores and obtaining lumber, furniture, food, and other items of value.[170] In many

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[167] Encyclopedia, Volume Five, p.636.

[168] Chapter 122, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, pp.907-8.

[169] Chapter 122, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, pp.906 & 908.

[170] Personal Communication, Dr. Thomas Nemec, Department of Anthropology, Memorial University. See also George Harding, "The Menace of Cape Race," Harper's Magazine, Vol.124, No.743 (April 1912), p.675.

cases they simply took what they needed and did not turn over what they recovered to the wreck commissioner (as they were legally required to do). The custom in that community was always to save lives first then salvage the cargo. Such activity occurred in other communities as well. While they could receive a reward by legally salvaging cargo, many fishermen felt the reward was unfair.

There is another reason why people might have become involved in the salvage of cargo. While the merchants influenced all social and economic activities in many Newfoundland communities during the 1890's, Sider contends that residents, through their resource base (the sea), were able to retain some sense of autonomy.[171] According to Sider, the sea is a common-property, open-access resource which could not be taxed, enclosed, or alienated.[172] Membership in a community was a precondition for access to it. When cargo washed up along a community's shores from this resource base, there is every reason to think that people believed it belonged to them and their community. Several incidents of salvage will be explored in later chapters.

How has the salvage of cargo during the nineteenth century been explored in the literature? Johnson discusses the activity in The Tragic Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*. According to Johnson, during the 1860's the law stipulated that all salvage was the property of the owners and although the person recovering such property would receive a

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[171] Sider, Culture and Class, p.28.

[172] Sider, Culture and Class, p.28.

fee of 5% of its value, anything found must be returned to the owners.[173] In his discussion of the salvage of the *Anglo Saxon*, Johnson is quick to note two important facts.[174] In no way did salvaging mean any disrespect for those who perished. The fishermen who went to the wreck did so to help find survivors, then recover and bury bodies. Second, Johnson notes that property rights were contentious in Newfoundland. Many fishermen and their families believed if they had not recovered the cargo, it would have been lost at sea anyway.

2.3.3 Safety At Sea

"Building in Safety", chapter four in historian Fred Winsor's Ph.D thesis on the Newfoundland Bank Fishery, explores the successive enactment of Shipbuilding Encouragement Acts and their impact on bank fishermen.[175] During the late 1880's, due to minimum construction standards and improper inspection capabilities, many of the ships used in the bank fishery were unseaworthy.[176] The damage to 72 Newfoundland-built ships in a gale on the Grand Banks in August 1887 was considered to be evidence of poor ship construction. The Newfoundland government attempted to solve the problem by making arrangements with Lloyd's of London to appoint a ship's surveyor on the island. The government also enacted several Shipbuilding Acts in order to improve

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[173] Johnson, Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*, p.62.

[174] Johnson, Wreck of the *Anglo Saxon*, p.61-2

[175] Winsor, "The Newfoundland Bank Fishery."

[176] Winsor, "The Newfoundland Bank Fishery," p.232.

construction standards. However, Winsor observes that rather than addressing the safety concerns of bank fishermen the legislation was actually aimed at improving the competitiveness of the Newfoundland shipbuilding industry.[177]

Winsor's study is important, but not simply as a study of safety issues. His work documents the government's concern to improve ship construction and reduce the incidents of unseaworthy ships in the late nineteenth century. The British government saw the repeated enactment of legislation as the way to solve problems of overloading and unseaworthy ships and thereby improve safety at sea. However, as we have already seen, it was not enough to simply have legislation on the books. The effectiveness of some statutes was limited by the ability of authorities to enforce them. Although much had changed by the late nineteenth century, with regards to public attitudes and the subsequent need for safety legislation, business concerns were still sometimes considered to be more important than the lives of seafarers and fishermen.

Another Newfoundland shipwreck study, John Feltham's Northeast From Baccalieu, provides a record of shipwrecks which occurred around uninhabited islands in Newfoundland. According to Feltham, the lack of navigational aids during the early nineteenth century made traveling around Newfoundland a "navigational nightmare" and left "the barren offshore islands and exposed headlands strewn with wrecks."[178]

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[177] Winsor, "The Newfoundland Bank Fishery," p.231.

[178] John Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications, 1990), pp.1 & 4.

Feltham's work is significant. His study concentrates on the area situated along the "Straight Shore." As was previously discussed, this area was one of the most hazardous for Harbour Grace fishermen and their families traveling to and from Labrador. Feltham's discussion provides insight into the dangers in this area. He also considers what the Newfoundland government did to alleviate these dangers.[179] Feltham identifies numerous wrecks which occurred before the lighthouse was built on Baccalieu Island in 1859, including one involving the *Active*, a sealing vessel which ran ashore on the island killing the captain and 25 members of her crew.[180] He is careful to point out that in spite of modern navigational aids, shipwrecks still occurred around many of these islands.

While professional and amateur historians have analyzed safety at sea from a variety of perspectives, including the role of the state, Raoul Andersen's "Nineteenth Century American Banks Fishing Under Sail" takes an anthropological approach.[181] Using the cases logged in dispatches from the United States Consul at St. John's from 1852 to 1912, he examines the prevalence and causes of day-to-day injury and death among American schooner and dory banks fishermen. Andersen also provides some insight into a community where life revolves around and depends on working at sea. His discussion of seafaring communities comes from sources other than the consular

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[179] I will be discussing this area, as well as shipwrecks which occurred there, in subsequent chapters.

[180] Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.15.

[181] Raoul Andersen, "Nineteenth Century American Banks Fishing Under Sail: Its Health and Injury Costs," Canadian Folklore Canadien, Vol.12, No.2 (1990).

dispatches, mostly secondary in fact. Although useful in identifying recorded cases of illness and injury among seafarers, the dispatches rarely included information about life in a seafaring community.[182] Andersen extends his discussion of the consular papers by using sources which were written by individuals with seafaring experience. For example, he uses the unpublished biography of Captain Arch Thornhill who began his fishing career in 1918, as well as the work of Victor Butler who fished from Harbour Buffett in Placentia Bay.[183]

Andersen uses Captain Thornhill's biography as a source in this article and others[184] to examine varying aspects of community life in Newfoundland. He discusses the income which widows received during the 1890's if their husbands perished while participating in the bank fishery. For men who survived injury, but were no longer able to participate in the fishery, he suggests that receiving charity was a "stigmatizing and undesirable step."[185] Andersen says much about the social and economic expectations

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[182] The dispatches included information such as the cause of the injury, the diagnosis, and treatment. Although the men involved in these cases were mainly American citizens, since Newfoundland, Nova Scotian and French vessels were fishing on the Grand Banks at the same time, Andersen makes comparisons with their experiences and with merchant and naval seafarers in general.

[183] Andersen, "Nineteenth Century American Banks Fishing Under Sail," pp.109 & 112. Note: Captain Thornhill's biography has since been published.

[184] Also see Raoul Andersen, "'Chance' and Contract: Lessons From a Newfoundland Banks Fisherman's Anecdote," in Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective, ed. Rosemary Ommer (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1990).

[185] Andersen, "Nineteenth Century American Banks Fishing Under Sail," p.117.

placed on Newfoundland fishermen by their families. Following information provided by Captain Thornhill, Andersen states that whether they wanted to or not, young men and boys were expected to go to the Banks. While most were compelled by dire poverty and threat of starvation, others were "literally hauled off by their families against their will."[186] Men were expected to be brave and to help support their families. They were expected to work and not receive charity. How did this attitude influence their actions, their work ethic, their attention to safety, while they were at sea?

2.3.4 Other Genres To Consider

One of the first attempts to study and record some of Newfoundland's folk beliefs about shipwreck occurred in 1920, when Elisabeth Greenleaf went to Sally's Cove, a small town on the west coast of the island, to teach at one of the Grenfell Mission schools. While she lived in the community, Greenleaf recorded both text and tunes as songs were sung to her. Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland is a compilation of her work.[187] Greenleaf discusses some of the folklore made known to her while she was in the community. For example, she was told that "no one should sing or play music when

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[186] Andersen, "'Chance and Contract," p.175.

[187] Elisabeth Bristol Greenleaf, Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland (Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates Inc., 1968), p.ii. For other collections of Newfoundland songs see Kenneth Peacock (Ed.), Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, Volume Three (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1965), Gerald Doyle, Old-Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland, Fourth Edition (St. John's, NF: Gerald S. Doyle Ltd., 1966), Maud Karpeles, Folk Songs From Newfoundland (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), and MacEdward Leach, Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1965).

the Northern Lights were out, or the Lights would come down and strike the player dead."[188] Greenleaf's collection of over 185 songs and ballads includes several ballads of nineteenth century Newfoundland shipwrecks and heroes including, "The *Greenland* Disaster" and "Captain William Jackman, A Newfoundland Hero".[189] Referring to shipwrecks, she comments that, "the precious 'literary quality' which we collectors seek in ballads is a very secondary thing to the folk who compose and sing them to recall to mind the brave deed of their heroes."[190] Songs enable us to both remember tragic wrecks and their heroes, but also serve as a historical record for all events in Newfoundland's history. According to Greenleaf,

> A complete collection of them would, I am sure, give a complete history of the island, from the early 'gams' [social visits] aboard the fishing vessels of all nations who came to fish the banks and to dry their catch ashore, through social movements like the emigration of the nineties, to politics, wars, sea disasters and every day life, including folk-motifs, and of a tone quite different from the historical ballads composed by the ruling classes..... The Newfoundlanders make up a song about any happening, usually tragic, which affects them.[191]

Stories and songs which commemorate shipwreck victims and survivors are an essential part of Newfoundland's culture. It was one way a partially illiterate

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[188] Greenleaf, Ballads, p.xxiv-xxv.

[189] See Greenleaf, Ballads, p.299 for "The *Greenland* Disaster" and p.294 for "Captain William Jackman, A Newfoundland Hero".

[190] Greenleaf, Ballads, p.xxxiv.

[191] Greenleaf, Ballads, p.xxxvii.

population[192] could remember those lost at sea. However, Greenleaf's comment is more significant. According to Greenleaf, many of the songs written in Newfoundland were often of a tone different from those composed by the ruling classes. Many events in Newfoundland's history - shipwreck, the decline in the fishery, the bank crash - affected people differently. Fishermen, seafarers, and their families lost family and their belongings to shipwreck. Unlike some merchants, they commonly did not have insurance. Fishermen and their families starved when the decline in the fortunes of the fishery did not put enough food on the table. The everyday lives and experiences of politicians, merchants, fishermen, and seafarers differed. Their perspectives on life, politics, laws, and shipwreck therefore differed as well.

Historian Rainer Baehre discusses how maritime disasters in Newfoundland are commonly commemorated in songs or verse. Such songs serve as records of past events and illuminate the sadness of family and community when a ship is lost.[193] For example, Baehre quotes the 1930's ballad "The Loss of the *Danny Goodwin*" as it describes a community's reaction to the loss of the ship (the community was Rose Blanche).

> There are five poor widows, left behind who will bitterly cry,
> All thinking of their loved ones who in the deep do lie,
> But we must all remember they fought hard for their lives,
> To sea they had to go and leave their children and their wives.[194]

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[192] According to the 1891 census for Newfoundland (excluding Labrador), approximately only 73,150 males and females, out of a total population of 197,934, could read and write. See Newfoundland, Census, 1891 (Volume One), p.455.

[193] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.309-10.

[194] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.310.

The people of Rose Blanche, regardless of their sadness, knew their men still had to go to sea. The same conception was held in many Newfoundland seafaring communities. Regardless of the dangers of seafaring, men still had to go to sea to support their families.

Haulin' Rope and Gaff, published in 1978 by Shannon Ryan and Larry Small, is a collection of songs related to Newfoundland sealing. The authors discuss how songs enable us to learn more about the sealing industry and parts of Newfoundland's cultural heritage.[195] Songs which commemorate the sealing disasters involving the *Greenland*, the *Newfoundland*, and the *Southern Cross* are useful as historical sources. The "*Southern Cross*" states how many men were on board the ship and where they were from.[196] It also documents the ship's disappearance, and most importantly, that no sign of the *Southern Cross* was ever found. Collections, such as those compiled by Ryan and Small, are useful in commemorating events and important moments in Newfoundland's history.

The literature also includes a work of fiction which helps to preserve the story of one Newfoundland hero. Eldon Drodge's Jackman, published in 2000, tells the story of Captain William Jackman, who risked his life to save the passengers and crew of the *Sea*

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[195] Shannon Ryan and Larry Small, Haulin' Rope and Gaff: Songs and Poetry in the History of the Newfoundland Seal Fishery (St. John's, NF: Breakwater Books, 1978), p. viii.

[196] Ryan and Small, Haulin' Rope and Gaff, pp.99-100. The *Southern Cross* carried 170 men, many of whom were from St. John's, Brigus, and Harbour Grace.

Clipper during a Labrador gale in October 1867.[197] While this true story of a man and his courage is documented by newspaper excerpts and photographs, Drodge admits his account is "partly factual, based on known, documented information, and partly fictional, interwoven with anecdotes, incidents, and fictitious characters" of his own creation.[198] Some examples of fictitious information in the book include the name of the ship and captain which collided with the *Sea Clipper* in Labrador. He also invented a fictional person, a woman saved by Jackman who, according to Drodge, survived to live to the "age of eighty-nine, outlasting three husbands and [who was] able to tell twenty-seven grandchildren and great-grandchildren about her great adventure."[199] Drodge's retelling of William Jackman's heroics documents the story of one of Newfoundland's greatest, yet relatively unknown, maritime heroes. During the nineteenth century, Jackman's actions were written about, praised, and rewarded. His courage was preserved in Newfoundland culture through song.

2.4 Conclusion

Shipwreck in and around Newfoundland involved people and communities.

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[197] Eldon Drodge, Jackman: The Courage of Captain William Jackman, One of Newfoundland's Greatest Heroes (St. John's, NF: Jesperson Publishing, 2000). There is some question about the name of the vessel. While it is listed as the *Sea Slipper* in Rainer Baehre's, Outrageous Seas (1999), it is listed as the *Sea Clipper* in Prim and McCarthy's, The Angry Seas. The account of the wreck, however, appears to be consistent.

[198] See Drodge, Jackman, p.12.

[199] See Drodge, Jackman. These characters are included in the story on p.17 & 129. While the captain and ship existed, note #2 on p.165 acknowledges their names are fictitious. Note #13 on p.166 acknowledges the character as being fictitious.

Several writers explore the social implications of shipwreck by discussing, for example, oral accounts, published narratives, and shipwreck ballads. Many studies cover topics such as safety at sea, the salvage of cargo, and legislative initiatives. However, rarely do these studies explore how communities were affected economically and socially by shipwreck; how a community's culture was influenced by such events.

More things are yet to be learned about Newfoundland communities from their residents' response to shipwreck. This includes residents' attitudes about shipping, safety at sea, the fishery, and state responsibility in the nineteenth century. There are other things to be considered too; the provision of relief, community responsibility, state responsibility, salvage, and commemoration. During the late nineteenth century the decline of the fishery affected many Newfoundland communities and several Newfoundland historians have discussed its effects. Cadigan and Ommer consider Newfoundland communities as places where people had to work together to survive. While Sider concurs that people worked together, he also suggests that there were tensions in communities between family members and between residents. Fishermen and their families depended on the merchants for food and fishing supplies. This relationship which was not always beneficial to the fishermen. The consequences of the loss of family are important considerations, but so too are the economic and social effects of shipwreck on the community. If the decline in the fishery influenced economic and social tensions in communities, how did such tensions affect a community's response to shipwreck?

Chapter 3: Shipwreck, Its Impact on Newfoundland Communities

Government and community did not co-exist separately in the late nineteenth century. At any time, in any community, the government influenced how people responded to shipwreck and the people in turn, influenced the government response. While a discussion of all late nineteenth-century shipwrecks would be beyond the scope of this study, my research identified several factors which led me to question why residents and the Newfoundland government responded to shipwreck in the ways that they did. Residents of many Newfoundland communities responded humanely to those affected by shipwreck. They provided survivors with food and clothing, and other essential items. Many Newfoundlanders commemorated the circumstances of shipwreck through story and song. Although all British shipping legislation applied to Newfoundland ships, seafarers, and fishermen, the Newfoundland government enacted additional legislation which addressed some of the circumstances of shipwreck, such as the salvage of cargo. It is the purpose of this chapter to further explore how residents of late nineteenth-century Newfoundland communities responded to shipwreck.

3.1 A Benevolent Response

Late nineteenth-century fishermen, seafarers, and their families understood the implications of shipwreck. In Newfoundland, shipping tragedy usually unfolded within small, isolated communities. The community response to shipwreck was sometimes one of kindness and sympathy. This was evident in 1889 when the British naval ship *Lily* ran aground at Point Amour, Labrador. People of the area rescued the crew and provided

them with food and clothing. When the 57 ton schooner *Maggie* and steamship *Tiber* collided outside the St. John's narrows in 1896, survivors were provided with clothing and medical attention. These shipwrecks will be discussed later in this chapter. In smaller communities such as Trepassey and Harbour Grace, however, where resources were limited, residents were not always able to assist those affected by shipwreck financially. The decline of the fishery changed economic and social life in nineteenth century Newfoundland communities. In 1894, the bank crash left many Newfoundlanders with bank notes which held no value, meaning they had no money to buy the basic necessities of life.[200] At that time, the sources of relief available to those in need, including widows and children, included community/public relief (obtained from public appeals made on their behalf) and government poor relief.

3.1.1 Appeals for Relief

While their families attended Christmas Eve services and waited to celebrate the Christmas season, Master Carter and eight crewmen left St. John's for Greenspond on the schooner *Puritan* which was returning home with a cargo of general merchandise. However, just after the new year began, the *Puritan* was shipwrecked at Cabot Island,

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[200] The cumulation of debt and poor banking practices led to a financial crisis in Newfoundland that affected everyone from merchants to fishermen. On December 10, 1894, the St. John's banks were unable to meet their financial obligations and as a result, refused payments to depositors. The notes of the banks became valueless. See Shannon Ryan, "The Newfoundland Salt Cod Trade in the Nineteenth Century," in Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Essays in Interpretation, eds. James Hiller and Peter Neary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp.49-50 and p.64 (footnote #25). Also see Encyclopedia, Volume One, p.120.

with eight of her nine men lost.[201] Cabot Island was one of the most remote islands in Bonavista Bay. It was nearly six miles from the nearest mainland and about ten miles north of Greenspond.[202] There had been a lighthouse on the island since 1880. Although it could be seen for several miles, visibility on this day was hindered by a heavy fog and rough seas and the crew mistook this light for the light on Puffin Island, only ten miles away.[203] Since they were following the course to be used around Puffin Island and not Cabot Island, they mistakenly led the 82 ton schooner onto the rocks.

Many of the men lost on the schooner left behind family who depended on them; Master Fred Carter and Robert Lush were both married, Kenneth Carter was married with two children, and Eli Allen was married with one child. Edgar Dyke, Job Burton, Ludwig Harding, and George Young were all single.[204] In an instant, poor weather and a miscalculation in location left women without husbands, children without fathers, and parents without sons. John Hoskins, the only member of the crew to survive, did so by leaping from the mainboom to the landwash. Now deprived of their breadwinners, several families had no choice but to depend on the charity of others. In February 1900, T.B. Darby, S. Dawson, and D. Blandford, the Methodist Minister, Incumbent, and MHA

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[201] "Awful Calamity," The Evening Telegram, 2 January 1900, p.4. While this article lists the master as A. Carter, subsequent reports list his name as Fred Carter.

[202] For a detailed description of the island's location see Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, pp.43-45.

[203] Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.45. The light on Cabot Island flashed every 15 seconds, while the light on Puffin Island flashed at 5 second intervals.

[204] "The Disaster at Cabot Island," The Evening Telegram, 4 January 1900, p.4.

for Greenspond respectively, wrote an appeal for relief on behalf of these women and children. It was published by the Evening Telegram on February 14, 1900:

> Two of these are widows, aged and helpless. Another is a widow with two small children. All are without any means of support. And in still another case a widowed mother has been bereft of her chief helper. A fund has been started here to aid the sufferers, and we beg to appeal to the charitable at St. John's to assist in making the lot of the bereaved less hard to bear.[205]

Seafarers, fishermen, and their families knew and accepted the reality; shipwreck was a daily part of their lives. The response to appeals made on behalf of shipwreck widows and orphans, like the one above, demonstrated how effectively the rhetoric of benevolence towards the victims of shipwreck was used during the late nineteenth century. This appeal focused mainly on the "charitable at St. John's." It was written to elicit sympathy and support from all who read it. Was such rhetoric used in other appeals and if so, was it as effective? This will be discussed using examples of other shipwrecks.

The study of this shipwreck, as well as others, introduces some factors for consideration, including culpability and local seafaring/fishing knowledge. In the case of the *Puritan*, such factors were curiously absent from the Evening Telegram report. There were several safety measures put in place in the area where the shipwreck occurred - lighthouses on Cabot Island and Puffin Island.[206] These, along with the crew's seafaring knowledge, did not save them from shipwreck. According to John Feltham, the

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[205] "*Puritan* Disaster," The Evening Telegram, 14 February 1900, p.4.

[206] Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.45.

differences between the islands should have been apparent to sailors familiar with the area.[207] I therefore suggest that it was well-known among residents of the community, especially among seafarers and fishermen familiar with the islands, that the crew made a mistake. Why were the circumstances of the wreck not reported? Did residents of Greenspond consider this tragedy as an 'Act of God'? While the answers to these questions are unknown, I suggest that residents might have been collectively protecting these men, as well as their local knowledge which was passed down from generation to generation. Many nineteenth-century Newfoundland fishermen and seafarers possessed a wealth of knowledge about their maritime environment.[208] Evolving from the daily experiences of residents, this local knowledge was part of a community's culture. Many Newfoundland fishermen and seafarers depended on their local knowledge to protect them, for example, from adverse weather. Many of them drew weather warnings from the stories and songs which had been passed down to them.[209] By protecting the fishermen, the residents of Greenspond were protecting part of their maritime culture.

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[207] Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.45.

[208] Barbara Neis, Paul Ripley, and Jeffrey Hutchings, "The 'Nature' of Cod (Gadus Morhua): Perceptions of Stock Structure and Cod Behaviour by Fishermen, 'Experts', and Scientists from the Nineteenth Century to the Present," in Marine Resources and Human Societies in the North Atlantic Since 1500, ed. Daniel Vickers (St. John's, NF: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995), p.160.

[209] Neis, Ripley, and Hutchings, "The 'Nature' of Cod," p.161. Local knowledge and its use by fishermen will be discussed further in section 3.2 "Cultural Impact". It will also be discussed in chapters four and five with regards to residents of Trepassey and Harbour Grace respectively.

Many residents of St. John's, including its wealthy business owners, merchants, and politicians, were aware of the circumstances of shipwreck and responded to them when necessary. This was evident in 1896 when the *Maggie* and *Tiber* collided outside the St. John's narrows.[210] However, while the constancy of shipwreck made it integral to life in small, coastal Newfoundland communities, it was not part of the daily experiences of many St. John's residents. It was not part of their everyday thought and practice. During the late nineteenth century the fishery was not the sole industry in St. John's, as was often in the case in many of Newfoundland's smaller communities. According to Newfoundland historian Keith Matthews, St. John's developed into a commercial and administrative centre while fishermen settled in other parts of the island.[211]

3.2 Cultural Impact

While the experiences of those affected by shipwreck are an important part of Newfoundland's history, they are also an important aspect of Newfoundland's folklore. According to Newfoundland historian L.E.F. English, "Folklore is the experience of a people. It takes the form of story, song, saying, peculiar custom, or superstition."[212] Some stories, for example, were based on events important to a community, but contained false

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[210] The response of St. John's residents to this accident will be discussed later in the chapter.

[211] Keith Matthews, Lectures on the History of Newfoundland 1500-1830 (St. John's, NF: Breakwater Books, 1988), p.167.

[212] William English, "Personal Papers of the late L.E.F. English, O.B.E., deposited by his nephew, Bill English," MUNFLA ms 84-570 (Folder #12 - "Folklore of Newfoundland"), Memorial University, 1984, p.305.

information such as names, dates, or places. They were known as cuffers.[213] According to Sider, these stories reminded people of what they might have forgotten and what might have changed since the event.[214] While my research did not uncover any examples of late nineteenth century cuffers, stories and songs which commemorate shipwreck victims and survivors serve much the same purpose. It was one way residents of Newfoundland communities could remember important events of the past. The stories and songs which follow recount the diverse experiences which affected residents of different communities around the island. From them I plan to analyze the cultural impact of shipwreck on Trepassey and Harbour Grace.

3.2.1 Stories

Fishermen were frequently caught far from shore in sudden storms and were unable to find their way home. This left their families bereft of their main breadwinner.[215] Their loss often left residents attempting to find some explanation for, or meaning in, such a tragedy. One explanation sometimes advanced for the loss of seafarers or fishermen at sea involved the supernatural. Stories of ghosts, mysterious lights, and phantom ships were frequent as there was scarcely a fishing village that did

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[213] Sider, Culture and Class, pp.161-62. The Dictionary of Newfoundland English defines a cuffer as a tale or yarn, an exaggeration of past common knowledge. See Cuffer [Dictionary of Newfoundland English On-line]; available from http://www.heritage.nf.ca/dictionary/azindex/pages/1165.html; Internet: accessed 3 September 2002.

[214] Sider, Culture and Class, pp.162-63.

[215] English, "Personal Papers," (folder #12), p.347.

not have its own legend of mystery and superstition which was founded upon tragedy.[216] These stories, although frightening to many, were not meant to be disrespectful to those who were lost. In fact, many fishermen saw these "ghosts" as serving a useful purpose. The sighting of a ghost ship usually meant bad weather was imminent and it was a warning many fishermen took to heart. The stories which follow represent different parts of the island - Bonne Bay, the Bonavista Peninsula, and Placentia Bay.[217]

The sighting of phantom ships was believed to be a warning.[218] Prior to 1901, an unknown west coast ship and all on board were lost at Wild Cove, Bonne Bay. It was a tragedy which did not end at the scene of the wreck. This was because the crew of a Woody Point schooner, traveling just across the bay, swore they were later guided into port by a token of the wrecked vessel.[219] According to the story, the "ghost" of the

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[216] English, "Personal Papers," (folder #12), p.378.

[217] See "Ghost Ship," in Fred Burden, "Legends, Supernatural and Humourous," MUNFLA ms 68-001E, unpublished research paper submitted for English 340, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1968; Boyd Trask, "Tales and Legends of Rumour and Belief," MUNFLA ms 68-024G, unpublished research paper submitted for English 340, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1968; "The Legend of the Ghost Ship," in Doreen Anne Mandville, "Twenty Stories of the Supernatural From Placentia Bay," MUNFLA ms 72-060, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3400, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972; and "The Dirty-Weather Boat of Flat Island, Placentia Bay," Richard Park, "Strange Happenings: Personal Experience Narratives and Legends of Gillams, Bay of Islands," MUNFLA ms 68-017E, unpublished research paper submitted for English 340, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1968.

[218] George Casey, "Spirits, Spooks, and Sprites," MUNFLA ms 67-032, unpublished research paper submitted for English 542, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967, p.73.

[219] Burden, "Legends," pp.7-8.

wrecked brig came alongside the schooner when it was making its way into the community. It tried to force the vessel to the beach and whichever way the Woody Point schooner went, the "ghost" brig followed alongside, trying to drive it ashore. It followed the schooner into anchorage, circled around, and went out of the bay again. Why was the "ghost" ship trying to drive the Woody Point schooner ashore? Was the "ghost" ship guiding the schooner to safety or was it committing an act of vengeance?

In Elliston, a small community located on the Bonavista Peninsula, it was the ghost of a dog rather than a ship which was recalled through story.[220] Throughout the nineteenth century Elliston was known as a graveyard for shipping. One shipwreck occurred when a schooner was driven ashore with all on board lost, including a large Newfoundland dog. According to legend, the dog's headless ghost has been seen every year since the disaster, on the anniversary of the wreck, in the vicinity of Crawler's Hill.[221] The name of the ship and the circumstances of the wreck are unknown. This story included aspects of illegal salvage. In his initial description of the impact of shipwreck on Elliston and surrounding communities, Trask describes people waiting for cargo to wash ashore. He describes how one person would go out in the water as far as he could, find items such as a barrel of flour and tub of butter, and pass them into shore

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[220] Trask, "Tales and Legends," pp.34-5.

[221] According to Trask in "Tales and Legends," p.34, Crawler's Hill is a small hill in Elliston that separates the North Side from the South Side. It is so named as it is "allegedly that during severe winter storms in the early days, people crossing this hill would be forced to get down on hands and knees and crawl. It is so close to the sea that one could easily be blown over."

until all items were stowed safely on the bank away from the sea. According to Trask, it was custom for people to show the wreck commissioner from Catalina only half of what they had actually recovered.[222]

While it was not clear whether the ships involved in the previous stories were foreign or local, the following involved foreign ships. The community and government response with respect to local and foreign vessels will be explored further in the examples and case studies, but for now, I will concentrate on two stories from Placentia Bay. According to "The Legend of the Ghost Ship,"[223] a phantom ship was seen entering the harbour of Placentia with all canvas flowing during a thunderstorm. According to Mandville, this occurred during the early French occupation of Placentia.[224] What initially made this ship unusual was that she continued on her course and did not anchor and clear with the port authorities, as it was custom to do at the time. When French officials sent out soldiers to arrest the captain for failing to comply with the rules of the port, the ship suddenly vanished, then reappeared as if it were leaving port again. According to the legend, when a flash of lightening lit up the area around the ship one could see that the ship was manned by a crew dressed in ancient garb. It was said to be a phantom Portuguese ship whose captain and crew might have been murdered by a horde

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[222] Trask, "Tales and Legends," p.34.

[223] Mandville, "Twenty Stories," pp.32-34.

[224] Mandville, "Twenty Stories," p.32. This legend seems to refer to the seventeenth century. The first ship of French settlers arrived in Placentia during the 1660's.

of Indians during the early colonization of the area. Fishermen who are in this area today still claim that during foggy and stormy weather, if one happens to be looking in the right direction at the right time, you can see this ship coming into the harbour.[225]

Another story told in and around Placentia involved the appearance of a phantom ship on the eve of a pending storm, a manifestation generally regarded by Newfoundland fishermen as warning of a storm or gale.[226] This story involved a mysterious boat known as the "Dirty-Weather Boat" of Flat Island, Placentia Bay.[227] Residents of the island described a black, noisy, and fast moving ship, in which the sound of chains rattling could be heard. On the mast of the ship there appeared to be a red light, most commonly seen at night, and when fishermen saw this light, they knew a storm was on the way. The origins of this story, according to old residents of Placentia Bay, involved the loss of a foreign ship and her crew around 1900, just off the reefs of the islands south-east of Flat Island. Many fishermen therefore believed the dirty-weather boat was actually the 'ghost' of this foreign ship and if they saw it, they would cancel all plans to go fishing the next day. Although sightings of the boat served to warn fishermen of bad weather, this ghost was also seen as a lure to death. If any fisherman was not familiar with the light and was out in a storm trying to make land, he would probably follow this light thinking it was a ship. As the "boat" always followed a course that took it to the reefs, the fisherman

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[225] Mandville, "Twenty Stories," p.34.

[226] English, "Personal Papers," (folder #12), p.378.

[227] Park, "Strange Happenings," pp.37-9.

would end up wrecked on the reefs as well.

The significance of these early legends is not entirely clear. They did not commemorate a personal loss of family or friends. I suggest that such stories were one way those left behind could come to terms with what happened. I would also suggest that such stories served to explain some of the risks taken by fishermen. I have already questioned whether the need to catch more fish and meet merchants' expectations encouraged fishermen to take unnecessary risks at sea. Did residents use the sighting of a phantom ship to explain why the fisherman and his boat ran into the rocks, instead of questioning why a fisherman was at sea in the midst of dangerous weather conditions? If so, such an attitude avoided questions of responsibility. These kinds of questions were raised more frequently during the late nineteenth century. People were questioning what was happening around them with regards to loss of life at sea. They also expected shipowners to be accountable for their actions. Even so, many Newfoundlanders depended on some of those shipowners for their livelihood. Such stories and their invocation of super-human forces might have been useful for easing tensions between residents and merchants.

3.2.2 Shipwreck Ballads

Many of Newfoundland's shipwrecks were commemorated in songs or verse. These songs served as records of past events and illuminated the sadness of family and community when a ship was lost.[228] The majority of these songs were written in the form

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[228] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.309-10.

of a ballad. Defined simply as a story in song, most ballads possessed a beginning and ending and portrayed dramatic action.[229] Numerous writers and historians have collected Newfoundland ballads which recount the heroism, loss of life, or loss of family from shipwreck.

"The Loss of the *Rammelly*"[230] documents the loss of an English ship, the *Ramillies*, which was wrecked off the coast of Devon in 1760. According to Kenneth Peacock, this old English shipwreck ballad, and Newfoundland's variation of it, may be regarded as the "prototype of all the later sea-disaster ballads composed in Newfoundland and the Maritimes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."[231]

It happened on a certain day
When the *Rammelly* was forced away,
When the wind came down a dreadful shock,
And the sea broke over her fore-top.
Helms a-lee, our ship won't stay,
It carried our fore-mast clean away,
She won't stay nor yet won't wear,
Nor gather any headway for to steer

Our captain he cried, "Bold Britons all,
Come listen awhile as I do call,
La'nch out your boats your lives to save
Or else the sea will prove your grave."
Overboard our boats they tossed,
Some got in and some got lost,
There were some in one and some more in another,
The ones down below they all got smothered.

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[229] Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.251.

[230] Peacock, Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, pp.954-55.

[231] Peacock, Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, p.955.

When this sad news from Plymouth came
The *Rammelly* was lost and all her men,
There were only nine left to tell the tale
How she behaved in the gale.
Come all you pretty fair maids and weep with me
Who lost your loves in the *Rammelly*.
May the Lord restore them when they cry,
And send them glory from on high!

Shipwreck ballads served as both a form of remembrance, as well as a historical record.[232] "The Loss of the *Rammelly*" documented a ship which was lost in a heavy sea and wind. Nine members of the ship's crew were able to reach the lifeboats, while the remainder of the crew drowned. The song also conveyed the agony of those left behind. The composer referred to weeping fair maids, women who lost their loved ones.

Other shipwreck ballads revealed the religious nature and fatalism of many who went to sea, to which Newfoundlanders were no exception. However, according to folklorist Kenneth Goldstein, it was a sense of fatalism which did not encourage passive surrender to the elements, but rather recognized and fought them whenever possible.[233] Goldstein discusses how many Newfoundlander's believed that "no matter how bad the weather, how dangerous the sea, how difficult his labour, the fisherman's trials and

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[232] Morgiana Halley, "Marine Disasters in Newfoundland Folk Balladry Including a Classificatory System for Sea Disaster Narrative," (St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Folklore, MA Thesis, June 1989), p.35.

[233] Kenneth Goldstein, "Faith and Fate in Sea Disaster Ballads of Newfoundland Fishermen," in By Land and By Sea: Studies in the Folklore of Work and Leisure, eds. Roger Abrahams, Kenneth Goldstein, Wayland Hand, with the assistance of Maggie Craig (Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Legacy Books, 1985), p.90.

tribulations will be rewarded by a place on 'the Heavenly shore'."[234] One such ballad which exemplified these beliefs was "The Schooner *Huberry*", a ballad the history of which Goldstein was unable to trace.[235] Due to its length, I have included only excerpts of it, those indicative of the religiosity and fatalism of Newfoundlanders.

Of a brave and fearless mariner I'm going to relate,
Of such a hardy seaman and how he met his fate;
Now let me tell to you quite plain of the mournful tragedy
That took the toll of five dear souls on the schooner *Huberry*.

She was a ship of sixty ton and trading on our shore,
And now that she has vanished and will be seen no more;
As for Captain Seaward, with me you will agree,
He was a Newfoundlander but his home was on the sea.

Out on the ocean crest, out on the raging foam,
The sea gulls sing their little songs for those who won't come home.
Now to ye people of New Perlican, to ye I say alone,
They're anchored on that Heavenly shore where troubles there are none.

It is a sad occurrence but it happens every day,
The sea takes to the cemetery the lives of ones most dear.
They will be missed throughout our land in summer, spring, and fall,
And how they got cast away is a mystery to us all.
No more to watch on a stormy deep expecting them to come;
They got their call, both one and all, for God has called them home.

With references to the "Heavenly shore" and God calling the men home, this ballad was indicative of the belief held by many Newfoundlanders. They recognized that it was their lot to live with, fight with, and otherwise deal with the sea, while the

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[234] Goldstein, "Faith and Fate," p.90.

[235] See Goldstein, "Faith and Fate," pp.91-92 for the entire ballad. He discovered the ballad from a blind singer, Dorman Ralph, whose brother read him the ballad from some printed source during the early 1940's.

outcome of man's fate rests with God.[236] Like the schooner *Huberry*, many Newfoundland ships simply disappeared during the late nineteenth century. "The Ship That Never Returned,"[237] collected by L.E.F. English, documents the occurrence of such events.

Said the pale faced boy to his tender mother
"Will you let me cross o'er the sea?
For people tell me that in foreign countries
There are health and wealth for me."
So she gave consent and a mother's blessing
While her heart forever yearned
For her absent boy who took a passage
On the ship that never returned.

"There is one more trip" said the gallant sailor
As he kissed his loving wife.
"There is one more trip in our old good ship
and I'll settle down in some quiet cottage
with the wealth that I have earned".
But, alas, poor man, he was doomed to sail
In the ship that never returned.

(Refrain) Did she ever return? No, she never returned,
And her fate is still unlearned.
And from that day to this there are fond hearts watching
For the ship that never returned.

How many women - wives, mothers, sisters - did this ballad represent in Newfoundland's history? Losses affected many families and communities during the late nineteenth century. Some women and children had to depend on charity and poor relief to survive. It must have been hard enough for a woman to lose a husband, father, or

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[236] See Goldstein, "Faith and Fate," p.90.

[237] English, "Personal Papers," (folder #12), pp.390-91.

brother at sea, but the fact of not knowing of his fate, as repeatedly emphasized in the refrain, suggested that loss of life at sea was more grievous than other kinds of bereavement.

3.3 The Government's Response

Discussion until this point has focused mainly on the impact of shipwreck on the community, on society in general, and more specifically, on the families of those who lost their main breadwinners. However, also relevant was the response of the Newfoundland government to shipwreck victims, survivors, and their families. During the late nineteenth century the relationship between government policy and community survival became even more important as the fishery declined and destitution increased on the island. This meant that regardless of intentions, people in many communities could only do so much to help shipwreck widows and their families. They were destitute themselves and resources were limited.

3.3.1 Welfare Policies/Poor Relief

During the early nineteenth century a philosophy of laissez-faire (government abstention from interference) prevailed.[238] As was seen in chapter one, the British government's reluctance to regulate the shipping industry was influenced by this philosophy. During the early nineteenth century the alleviation of economic need was considered by some people to be the responsibility of organized charity rather than the

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[238] Hope, British Shipping, p.235.

state.[239] However, my research shows that there were some state initiatives to aid the destitute in Newfoundland at that time. In 1825, Governor Sir Thomas Cochrane established an informal system of poor relief.[240] In the 1840's, widows and orphans, among others, were classified by the Newfoundland government as "permanent poor," meaning they received a living allowance of four to six pence per day which was paid either directly to them or to a third party on their behalf.[241] After the establishment of Responsible Government in 1855 the distribution of poor relief was made more readily available.[242] In June 1868, the Government issued a proclamation which stated that provisions of relief were confined to, "the sick, the infirm, and to destitute widows and orphans and that others (the able-bodied unemployed) who had been in the habit of depending upon the government for support should make preparation for the coming winter."[243]

In the late nineteenth century, despite the initiatives discussed above, the Newfoundland government had no long-term policy with regards to social services.[244] The informal system of poor relief established during the 1830's and 1840's continued to

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[239] Godfrey, Human Rights, p.13.

[240] Godfrey, Human Rights, p.9-10.

[241] Baker, "The Politics of Poverty," p.3.

[242] Baker, "The Politics of Poverty," p.8.

[243] Godfrey, Human Rights, p.24.

[244] Godfrey, Human Rights, p.36.

be followed, but was only provided by the House of Assembly on an ad hoc basis and was still not given legislative status.[245] During the late nineteenth century the colony's bank crash might have limited the government's ability to provide formal relief to the poor. However, I also suggest that making any sort of revisions to poor relief, especially if these revisions involved tighter limitations on eligibility, might have affected the government's popularity. In 1834 and again in the 1870's and 1880's, Great Britain's Poor Laws, on which Newfoundland's system of relief was based, were reformed to limit the number of people who were eligible for relief. According to sociologist Robert Lewis, any Newfoundland government which attempted similar reforms would have lost popular support.[246] While the philosophy of laissez-faire prevailed in Great Britain until the mid-nineteenth century, since the 1830's the great majority of Newfoundlanders had believed that it was the responsibility of the government to take care of society's dependent, especially the aged and widows.[247]

3.3.2 Provisions For Shipwrecked Seafarers

While the informal system of poor relief administered during the late nineteenth century applied to those left destitute by shipwreck, the government also had specific ways of dealing with the victims of such events. My research shows that throughout the

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[245] Robert M. Lewis, "'Representative-beggars of a Set of Paupers': The Politics of Social Welfare and Traditional Newfoundland," Newfoundland Studies, Vol.13, No.2 (1997), p.147.

[246] Lewis, "'Representative-beggars,'" p.148.

[247] Lewis, "'Representative-beggars,'" p.147.

late nineteenth century the Newfoundland Government paid various expenses on behalf of shipwrecked crews around the island.[248] For example, an examination of the Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1891 - which includes any and all expenditures for the year 1890 - revealed that the government supported several shipwrecked crews that year.[249] On June 3, the government paid the railway $17.30 to take fourteen persons from the shipwrecked *Gladiola* to their respective homes.[250] Several of the coastal steamship companies were also reimbursed by the government for conveying shipwrecked crews home.[251]

Ten years later, when Premier Robert Bond received a message from Magistrate Avery of Bonne Bay telling him about the wreck of the schooner *Mignonette* in April 1900, he responded in a similar manner.[252] After learning that Captain Elliott and his crew of 22 men were stranded near the scene of the wreck in Blanc Sablon, Labrador, the Premier commissioned a ship to pick up the shipwrecked men, and provided them with railway fare for their passage home to Notre Dame Bay. As the crew were also short on provisions, the Premier made arrangements, through the Poor Commissioner, for the men

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[248] See "Statement of Expenditure on Account of Shipwrecked Crews" in Appendices of the Journal, 1891-1901.

[249] See "Statement of Expenditure on Account Shipwrecked Crews for the Year Ending December 31, 1890," Journal, 1891, pp.298-325 in Appendices.

[250] See "Statement of Expenditure," Journal, 1891, p.304.

[251] See "Statement of Expenditure," Journal, 1891, pp.298-325.

[252] "Story of Wreck of Schooner *Mignonette*," The Evening Telegram, 10 May 1900, p.4.

to be provisioned for their trip home as well. While the Evening Telegram praised Premier Bond for his prompt response to the needs of these shipwrecked seafarers,[253] the newspaper neglected to state that Bond's actions, even if performed out of concern for the well-being of the crew, were also mandated by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894. In chapter one, I made reference to the fact that all aspects of Newfoundland's shipping were subject to the Merchant Shipping Act. According to the Act, authorities in British possessions were obliged to look after distressed seamen who, by reason of having been shipwrecked from any British ship or any of her majesty's ships, were in distress in any place abroad.[254]

3.3.3 Establishment of a Lloyd's Surveyor

In 1890, Robert Bond, who was the Colonial Secretary at that time, began discussions with Lloyd's Registers of Shipping in London to have one of their surveyors come to work in Newfoundland. In response to his enquiries, he received a letter from Lloyd's about their proposed appointment of a surveyor at St. John's, discussing payment, arrangements, and duties of surveyor.[255] Lloyd's surveyors had extensive knowledge of vessel design and construction and were competent in assessing acceptable hull designs, shipbuilding practices and techniques. It was determined that a local man

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[253] "Story of Wreck of Schooner *Mignonette*.

[254] See Section 191 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 in Pulling, The Shipping Code, pp.83-84.

[255] PANL, Colonial Secretary. Incoming Correspondence, 1890-91, GN2/2, Letters from Lloyd's Registers of Shipping, 8 October 1890 and 16 October 1890.

was not to be appointed in such a position as the surveyor should be "entirely independent of local influence."[256] One of the main reasons that the Newfoundland government requested this appointment was that the objectives of their 1890's shipbuilding legislation, which offered incentives to improve the conditions of ships built in Newfoundland, were being undermined by the number of lives and ships lost at sea. It was thought that a Lloyd's surveyor would ensure all Newfoundland ships were seaworthy and as such, save the lives of many fishermen and seafarers. According to The Evening Telegram,

> There is no office of supervision so absolutely necessary to the welfare of the people in this country as that of Lloyd's Surveyor. It is bound with the safety of the fishermen's calling and of his life. In the past, he (the fishermen) was completely at the mercy of those outfitters who, from either motives of greed or want of capital, sent him to sea in crafts unfit to be afloat and it is fearful to contemplate the number of valuable lives lost to their families.[257]

This editorial used language reminiscent of that used by Samuel Plimsoll twenty years earlier in Great Britain. However, all Newfoundlanders did not agree that it was necessary to establish a Lloyd's surveyor on the island. According to the Evening Telegram, "certain interested parties" were attempting to abolish the office of the Lloyd's Surveyor in 1892.[258] Whether the interested parties were members of

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[256] See Winsor, "The Newfoundland Bank Fishery," p.262 and PANL, GN2/2, Letter from Lloyd's Registers of Shipping, 24 October 1890.

[257] "An Attempt to Abolish the Office of Lloyd's Surveyor", The Evening Telegram, 8 March 1892, p.4.

[258] "An Attempt to Abolish the Office of Lloyd's Surveyor", The Evening Telegram.

government or the opposition, merchants, or private citizens is not apparent and why they wanted to abolish the office is unknown.

3.4 Legal and Illegal Salvage

Many of those involved in illegal salvage did not consider themselves to be doing anything wrong. Once the salvors had taken care of the shipwrecked passengers and crew, they saw nothing wrong with taking what they needed for their families. While there is some evidence to show there were salvors with malevolent motives,[259] I suggest that many who illegally obtained wrecked goods only did so because they felt they did not receive the compensation they were entitled to by statute. My discussion begins with the legal salvage of cargo. It will also explore the ambiguity involved with illegal aspects of the activity.

3.4.1 Legal Salvage

As legal salvage could involve both the ship's cargo as well as the ship, shipwrecks, such as that of the *Scottish King* in November 1898,[260] meant good fortune for people and in turn, their communities. The ship was traveling from Antwerp to Boston and Baltimore with a cargo of general merchandise and its voyage was uneventful until a dense fog was encountered around Newfoundland. By the time the early morning light of November 30 revealed towering cliffs and the sounds of the sea dashing on the

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[259] See "The *Maggie* - November 1896" later in this chapter.

[260] See "*Scottish King* Ashore at Seal Cove," The Evening Telegram, 30 November 1898, p.4 and "Back From the Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 3 December 1898, p.4.

rocks, it was too late. The 3317 ton steamer *Scottish King* ran ashore at Seal Cove, near Renews, on the island's southern shore. The boats were launched and all on board were saved. However, with at least ten feet of water in the ship's hold, the ship's cargo[261] was in danger. It consisted of a variety of items including wine in puncheons; casks containing machine oil; zinc, lead, fancy toys, matches, rags in bales, approximately 800 cases of champagne, beer, mineral water of different kinds, Catholic prayer books, fancy glassware, 6000 boxes of glass of various sizes, cream separators, kegs of salts, dyes, and 80 breech-loading guns. The salvage of such a cargo was an enormous task and the Wreck Commissioner used his legal powers to request assistance from the people of the area.[262] Observed by the Wreck Commissioner, Constable Greene of Cape Broyle, and the Customs Officer, residents of the area diligently and properly removed the cargo from the ship in a law-abiding manner.[263] Once the cargo had been removed, they began working on salvaging the ship itself.

The salvage of the *Scottish King's* cargo and then the ship itself took almost two years. While the market value of the ship's cargo is unknown, the wreck of the ship was considered to be the "most valuable wreck that the people of that part of the coast ever

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[261] "Return From Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 12 December 1898, p.4.

[262] See Chapter 122 in Newfoundland, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, pp.903-912 and Chapter 173 (Of Wreck and Salvage) in Newfoundland, The Consolidated Statutes of Newfoundland, Third Series: Being a Consolidation of the Statute law of the Colony, Down To and Including the Session of the Legislature in the Year 1916 (St. John's, NF: Robinson & Co., 1919), pp. 1592-1601.

[263] "Return From The Wreck," December 12, 1898.

struck."[264] As was discussed in chapter two, those involved in the salvage of the ship were entitled to a "reasonable amount of salvage, including expenses properly incurred."[265] While the evidence does not indicate how payment was calculated, most of the salvors made at least fifty dollars in cash from the wreck, while others made five times that amount.[266] This was important because it served as an example to the community of how the legal procedure for salvage could bring appropriate rewards. It also served to bring prosperity to the community, enabling many fishermen to gain some independence from the merchants that year. I referred previously to the truck system; a system whereby fishermen received credit from the merchant, never cash. The cash made from the salvage of the wreck was significant because it meant most of the men were able to buy what they required for the summer fishery, instead of receiving credit from merchants.[267]

Unfortunately, not all incidents of salvage were so profitable. When salvors felt they did not receive the compensation they deserved, they sometimes followed the appropriate legal measures and in accordance with statute,[268] took the matter to court. Such cases are important to maritime historians as they reveal much about how the

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[264] "From The Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 2 December 1898, p.4.

[265] Chapter 122, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.909.

[266] "A Valuable Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 9 May 1900, p.4.

[267] "A Valuable Wreck," 9 May 1900, p.4.

[268] See Chapter 122, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, pp.909-912.

statute was interpreted in the courts. They also reveal that salvors were allowed the opportunity to make their own case for a proper reward. In 1881, the *Alice Lyne*, laden with 340 tons of coal and a small quantity of spirits, ran into trouble near Bay Bulls about ten o'clock at night.[269] With the state of their vessel unknown, the master and crew abandoned the ship and told some in the community about their situation. Although the master had no intention of returning to his ship and felt it was irrevocably damaged, some men from the community decided to see what was happening. They found the ship drifting in towards land so before any major damage occurred, they salvaged what they could. The vessel was eventually towed to St. John's and the men, having risked their lives salvaging materials and cargo at night, requested $8000 in compensation, which seemed reasonable as the value of the ship, cargo, and freight was estimated at $14,000.[270] Here was where the dispute began. While the owners of the ship also believed the salvors were entitled to a "fair and reasonable" salvage, they offered only $2500 in compensation, considerably less than the salvors requested.[271]

It was up to the Supreme Court to settle this issue. According to the court, there were four primary ingredients to be considered when awarding salvage compensation - the risks to the lives of the salvors, the degree of danger from which the property was

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[269] See "The *Alice Lyne* Cargo and Freight," in Newfoundland, Supreme Court Decisions of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland (Newfoundland Law Reports), 1874-1884 (St. John's, NF: J.W. Withers, Queen's Printer, 1898), pp. 282-287.

[270] "The *Alice Lyne*," in Newfoundland, Supreme Court Decisions, p.284.

[271] "The *Alice Lyne*," in Newfoundland, Supreme Court Decisions, p.284.

rescued, the degree of labour which the salvors incurred, and the value of the items salvaged.[272] Although the Newfoundland statute did not oblige it, my examination of other salvage disputes revealed that courts customarily took all four factors into account.[273] This is important because it indicated that there was a higher authority, the Supreme Court, which recognized the risks many fishermen took when legally salvaging cargo. In this case, although the court recognized the risk to the salvors, it also felt there was not much time, skill or labour used as the entire operation took only about three hours. The court therefore ruled that the award initially offered to the salvors was a "fair and liberal compensation" for their services.[274]

The court's ruling raises questions about the role of the state in judging issues in which it has no experience. The judge based part of his ruling on the fact that the salvage operation only took three hours and subsequently, did not involve much "time, skill, or labour." How could the judge possibly know the skill or labour required in such an operation since he probably had never taken part in such an activity? This was an example of how some judgements and government policies were made by people with little understanding of the everyday problems of those who lived in Newfoundland's

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[272] "The *Alice Lyne*," in Newfoundland, Supreme Court Decisions, p.285.

[273] These considerations were later specifically stated in the "Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules of Law Relating to Assistance and Salvage at Sea," in Brussels on September 23, 1910. See Nagendra Singh, British Shipping Laws: International Maritime Conventions, Volume Four (Maritime Law) (London: Stevens, 1983), p.3085. Newfoundland, by the accession of Great Britain, was subject to this law as of March 1914.

[274] "The *Alice Lyne*," in Newfoundland, Supreme Court Decisions, p.286.

small coastal communities.

3.4.2 Illegal Salvage

On the night of July 18, 1899, bound from Twillingate to North Sydney, the English schooner *Ethel* ran ashore at Petty Harbour Motion in a dense fog and heavy sea. All who were on board, the captain, crew, and one passenger, were able to reach Petty Harbour and according to the Evening Telegram, were treated with the greatest kindness.[275] However, on August 14 1899, it was reported that 42 Petty Harbour fishermen had been charged with keeping and concealing wreckage from the schooner.[276] Unfortunately, further examination of several newspapers, including the Evening Telegram and the Daily News revealed little about the incidents mentioned above and the case was reported as being dismissed the very next day. Even so, in November 1899, John Chafe Sr., John Chafe Jr.,[277] and William Walsh were convicted for secreting certain property from the wreck of the schooner *Ethel* and sentenced to two months' imprisonment.[278]

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[275] See "Schooner Ashore," The Evening Telegram, 19 July 1899, p.4.

[276] See "Meting Out Justice," The Evening Telegram, 14 August 1899, p.4, "Petty Harbour Motion," The Evening Telegram, 15 August 1899 and "Meting Out Justice," The Evening Telegram, 15 August 1899, p.4.

[277] The use of Sr. and Jr. must have referred to the men's ages. According to information presented in the petitions, these men were not related.

[278] See PANL, Governor's Miscellaneous Despatches and Local Correspondence, GN 1/3/A (Despatch #316, 1899), Petitions in favour of men accused of stealing from a wreck, 15 & 21 December 1899. Also see "Meting Out Justice," The Evening Telegram, 29 November 1899, p.4 for the conviction of William Walsh. According to the newspaper, he had taken and secreted the mainsail valued at $200. The convictions of

While these men served their sentence, their dependants were paying the price for their actions, struggling on their own with no source of heat for the forthcoming winter. As a result, Ellen Chafe (wife of John Chafe Sr.), Helen Walsh (wife William Walsh), and Margaret Chafe (mother of John Chafe Jr., who was financially supported by her son) all presented petitions to Governor Sir Henry McCallum asking for their husbands' and son's early release. The petitions were similar in format as each woman swore to her husband's/ son's character and told McCallum of their difficulty in supporting themselves and their dependents now that their husbands were in jail.[279] Attached to each petition for support, swearing to the good character of the men and to the fact that they were honest and hard-working, were letters from Rev. Roger Tierney, the Parish Priest at Petty Harbour.[280] Governor McCallum wrote to Judge Conroy for his opinion.[281] In his response, while Judge Conroy admitted these men were not part of the criminal classes and as a result, probably felt their punishment much more keenly, he also

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two months imprisonment against John Chafe Sr. and John Chafe Jr. were not listed in the newspaper. There was a conviction listed against a J. Chafe, but this person received a fine of $100 and seven days grace for stealing clothes belonging to one of the crew. See "Meting Out Justice," The Evening Telegram, 18 November 1899, p.4. Whether this was an additional charge against one of the Chafe's or another man is not known.

[279] PANL, GN 1/3/A (Despatch #316, 1899), Petitions. Ellen Chafe had three children and an orphan; Helen Walsh had four children; Margaret Chafe was a widow with three daughters and an orphan niece.

[280] PANL, GN 1/3/A (Despatch #316, 1899), Letters from Rev. Roger Tierney, attached to each petition, 19 December 1899.

[281] PANL, GN 1/3/A (Despatch #316, 1899), Letter from Governor Sir Henry McCallum to Judge Conroy, 22 December 1899.

believed that the moral effect of their punishment would be a powerful deterrent and abiding lesson to the community.[282] It was apparent that Judge Conroy was sending a message to residents of small, coastal communities; illegal salvage was a crime and those caught taking part in such activities would be punished, regardless of the circumstances. Why the salvors might have committed these acts knowing them to be illegal was of no relevance to authorities, though it is highly likely to be an expression of need. Governor McCallum subsequently declined the mens' pleas for release stating that he could not find sufficient cause to grant the petitions.[283]

3.5 Some Late Nineteenth Century Newfoundland Shipwrecks

While previous sections within this chapter have explored the community and government response to shipwreck in late nineteenth century Newfoundland, the division between the two was never clear. The government influenced how people responded to shipwreck and the people in turn, influenced the government response. Using four shipwrecks which occurred in different years and in different locations, I will further explore further the community and government response to shipwreck in Newfoundland.

3.5.1 The *Lily* - September 1889

On September 16, 1889, the H.M.S *Lily*, a British naval ship, left Brig Bay to

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[282] PANL, GN 1/3/A (Despatch #316, 1899), Letter from Judge Conroy to Governor Sir Henry McCallum, 23 December 1899.

[283] PANL, GN 1/3/A (Despatch #316, 1899), Denial of release, 23 December 1899.

meet the H.M.S. *Emerald* in Forteau, Labrador.[284] Leaving this small fishing and logging community on Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula meant crossing the Strait of Belle Isle, an area where mariners were usually hampered by heavy swells.[285] About half way through the journey a heavy fog and wind began to set in. While there was a fog alarm just north of Forteau at Point Amour (or Amour Point as it is known now) and it was working according to all accounts, the crew of the *Lily* did not hear it. As a result, they had no idea they were actually north of their destination and approaching shore, destined to run aground. According to H.F. Shortis, the "position of the ship and crew was a most perilous one" - night was coming on, there was a heavy sea and dense fog, and those on board had no idea where they were, except for the sound of a fog whistle close on shore.[286] Two boats were immediately lowered. While one capsized and drowned some of those on board, the other was stranded in the stormy sea, unable to reach shore or return to the ship. The captain sent a distress signal in the form of gun fire, a signal that was fortunately heard by the lighthouse keeper and his assistants.

It was not only the gun fire, however, that gained the attention of those on shore. Some of the men who were in the capsized boat, about thirty of them, managed to make

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[284] For a complete account of the wreck see H. F. Shortis, "Loss of H.M.S. *Lily*: A Graphic Account," Shortis, Vol.7, No.303 (Date Unknown), pp.1-6, Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Three, pp.119-128, and Prim and McCarthy, The Angry Seas, pp.61-66.

[285] Strait of Belle Isle [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador on-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/80/8043.htm; Internet: accessed 18 April 2002.

[286] Shortis, "Loss of *Lily*," p.1.

it to shore, half naked and exhausted, and reached the lighthouse. They were in a terrible state, both physically and emotionally, as they thought of their comrades in a small boat at sea and they were "filled with the gravest apprehension as to the fate of those left on the ship."[287] Several calls for help were sent out to surrounding communities as assistance was needed for both those on board the sinking ship as well as those who made it to shore. Keep in mind that southern Labrador was not an overly populated area during the late nineteenth century so their response to those in need was even more amazing. It was fortunate for the crew of the *Lily* that Mr. Ellis Watson and his crew from Trinity Bay were in Lance-au-Loop, just north of the area, and did not hesitate to offer their assistance. The crew of the *Emerald* was also informed of the disaster and they set out to offer assistance as well. However, the rescuers reached the scene of the wreck only to discover that under the prevailing conditions - darkness, fog, sea, and wind - an immediate rescue was an impossibility. When daylight finally broke, it revealed a ship almost completely underwater. It was essential that captain and crew be rescued at once. To do so, they had two men come in to shore with a line from the ship. Once on shore, they secured the line and attached a chair to it on which seamen were able to travel safely ashore. As the *Emerald* had also arrived to help, they rescued the men who had been trapped between their ship and shore in a small boat. The brave acts performed by several men were later recognized by higher authorities. On December 9, 1889, John Barbour, who was the sailor who landed the first lifeline, was awarded the Albert Medal

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[287] Shortis, "Loss of *Lily*," p.2.

(second class) by Queen Victoria.[288] Several years later the British Admiralty awarded clocks to several other men for their role in saving the officers and crew of the *Lily*.

Once all lives had been saved and the crew of the *Emerald* had salvaged what they could, only Mr. William Wyatt of Point Amour was given the authority to salvage stores from the wreck. A notice was placed on the community's beach to that effect. After the *Emerald* returned to its naval base in Halifax, however, Captain Walker wrote the Newfoundland Government demanding that legal action be taken against several men from the Point Amour area - especially William James Pelly - for taking materials from the wreck of the *Lily* without permission.[289] Captain Walker had visited the wreck before returning to Halifax and supported by information from some individuals in the community, was led to believe the wreck had been pillaged by several men, especially Mr. Pelly. For whatever reason, the Attorney General was not so quick to agree with the captain. He ordered a police investigation which turned up a damaged whaler from the wreck in Mr. Pelly's store, but it was later acknowledged, in a letter from Captain Walker himself that Mr. Pelly had been given the damaged whaler by one of the officers of the *Lily*. In the end, the police found no evidence of illegal salvage and the matter was dropped.

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[288] Prim and McCarthy, Angry Seas, p.65-6.

[289] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Three, p.126-27. This man was known as Penny in Prim and McCarthy, The Angry Seas, p.65.

3.5.2 The *Pubnico Belle* - July 1891

On July 11, 1891, The Evening Telegram reported that the schooner *Pubnico Belle*, 45 tons and 52 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 8 feet deep, was wrecked off Baccalieu Island.[290] Bound from Goose Bay, Bonavista Bay to St. John's with a cargo of wharf posts, the schooner ran ashore during a rain storm. It was later reported that while the captain, four crew members, and three passengers had been saved, seven had drowned - Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman and her infant son, two boys and a girl (the three children of Mrs. Rachel Burton, a survivor), a little girl Alice Hicks, and Miss Caroline Higgins.[291] This tragedy was compounded by the fact that Rachel Burton lost not only her three small children, but also her sister and nephew (Mrs. Freeman and her son). Baccalieu Island and its hazards will be discussed in more detail in chapter five as it was one of the hazardous areas through which Harbour Grace fishermen and their families travelled. For the purposes of the current discussion, it was the fact that while the captain and four crew members all survived the wreck (as well as three female passengers), two women and five children were not so fortunate. From the very beginning, speculation was rampant as to how seven passengers could drown while the captain and crew managed to survive. Questions were subsequently raised about their efforts.

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[290] See Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four (St. John's, NF: Creative Publishers, 1997), pp.77-85, Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, pp.23-25, and The Evening Telegram, 11, 21, 22, 24, 29 July and 6 August 1891.

[291] "Three Saved of *Pubnico Belle* Passengers," The Evening Telegram, 14 July 1891, p.4.

On July 15, The Evening Telegram published Captain Butt's account of the wreck.[292] According to the captain, the ship was caught in the storm and the high winds carried her in toward Baccalieu Island. As the ship struck the rocks, one of the crewmen leapt ashore and was thrown a rope by which the other crewmen got ashore safely. At the same time, according to Miss Julia Burton, one of the survivors, all the women were below deck and had no idea they were in danger. The commotion above caused her to go up on deck and when she did, she saw three crewmen ashore on a rock and the captain on deck with the end of a rope in his hands, the other end being held by the three men ashore. It looked to her like they were abandoning the women and children so she called the other women to come on deck. The women and children made it up on deck and Julia Burton was pulled ashore with the rope, but others were not so fortunate. She tells us about one of Rachel Burton's children being swept from her arms as they were being pulled to safety and little Malcolm Burton, clinging to the rigging, calling out for a rope that never came.[293]

The survivors were cared for by the lighthouse keeper of Baccalieu Island and his family. Six men from Lower Island Cove found five of the seven bodies, giving up their fishing and rowing a distance of more than nine miles to see what they could do.[294] While

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[292] "Particulars of *Pubnico Belle* Disaster," The Evening Telegram, 15 July 1891, p.4.

[293] "Particulars of *Pubnico Belle* Disaster," The Evening Telegram, 15 July 1891, p.4.

[294] See "Touching Tribute," (Letter to the Editor), The Evening Telegram, 6 August 1891, p.4.

the community took responsibility for the survivors and the deceased, no one took responsibility for the wreck. The captain gave excuses and never adequately explained how he and his crew survived; the shipowner blamed the wreck on the captain by saying he believed the ship was seaworthy and he was unaware there were passengers on board. There was initially no inquiry held in connection with the loss of the *Pubnico Belle*. There was a charge of illegal salvage, involving the ship's sails, which turned out to be a mistake and was later dismissed.[295] However, once the court had begun to examine the circumstances of the wreck, a public inquiry was the result. Problems with the sails and hull of the ship were revealed as testimony was taken from various individuals regarding the condition of the ship. The issues raised by the loss of the ship were ones that take us back several years to those involving unseaworthy ships, including Plimsoll's fight over what were known as "coffin ships".

The Newfoundland government's response to the wreck of the *Pubnico Belle* was both questionable and contradictory. On the one hand, the government paid several expenses on behalf of the master, crew, and passengers. They provided them with food, clothing, and passage home and provided coffins for the deceased as well.[296] However, why was there initially no inquiry held into the tragedy? During the late nineteenth century independent marine courts of inquiry were usually held in cases of shipwreck in

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[295] See "*Pubnico Belle* Disaster," The Evening Telegram, 21 July 1891, p.4.

[296] See "Statement of Expenditure on Account Shipwrecked Crews, For Year Ending December 31, 1891," in Newfoundland, Journal, 1892, pp.298-301, 305, & 309 in appendices.

and around Newfoundland.[297] When an incident occurred "on or near the coasts of Newfoundland and its dependencies," such an inquiry might be convened if the circumstances included:[298]

- the loss, abandonment, or damage of any ship
- any ship which caused the loss or damage of another ship
- loss of life ensued from any casualty happening on board a ship
- the loss, abandonment, damage or casualty which occurred elsewhere but witnesses were found or arrived on the island
- a charge of misconduct or incompetency brought by any person against a master, mate or engineer of a British ship.

By all accounts, the *Pubnico Belle* seemed to meet all criteria for a marine court of inquiry. The ship was lost, loss of life occurred, and there was an accusation of misconduct against the captain and crew. While there is no way to be sure, I suggest that the government might have been protecting one of its own members. The owner of the *Pubnico Belle* was James Murray, a St. John's merchant who was also coincidently a backbencher in the Whiteway Government, the Member of the House of Assembly for the Burgeo-LaPoile district.[299] This coincidence cannot be ignored as the government initially failed to respond to the public demand to know what happened on board the ship. No one, neither the captain, crew or shipowner, was ever held accountable for the

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[297] Chapter 116 (of a Marine Court of Inquiry), Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, pp.880-882 and Chapter 170 (of Marine Courts of Enquiry), Consolidated Statutes, Third Series, pp.1585-1589. While the statute is generally the same, several additional sections were added, including one which addressed grounds for suspending or cancelling certificates.

[298] Chapter 116, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.880.

[299] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four, p.82 and Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.23.

lives lost on the *Pubnico Belle.*

3.5.3 The *Rose* - June 1894

In June 1894, while sailing to Labrador with 62 people on board, the schooner *Rose* struck a pan of ice about ten miles northeast of Tilt Cove, off the Baie Verte Peninsula.[300] Captain Henry Gosse, along with a crew of five or six men, was taking several families, consisting of men, women, and children to Labrador to live and fish for the summer. Each family carried everything they owned - food, household effects, clothing, and supplies - on the ship. The ship departed in perfect weather, but conditions changed as they traveled towards Labrador. As the ship moved through a heavy fog, the captain could not see the ice pans in the water. After striking the ice it took only six minutes for the schooner to sink. "One can only imagine the ensuing terror - mothers frantically gathering children and preparing to abandon ship, the men torn between helping family and launching the lifeboats or trying to save their own lives."[301] While some were able to escape on boats, there were not enough for all on board. This left almost thirty people to struggle in the water. To help them, the boats let people off on the ice pan and returned to save who they could. While some were rescued, 12 people drowned. The stranded survivors waited on the ice pan for several hours until they were

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[300] See The Harbor Grace Standard, 19, 29 June, 3 July 1894, the Twillingate Sun, 30 June, 7 July 1894, The Evening Telegram, 30 June, 2 July 1894, Robert Parsons, Raging Winds, Roaring Seas (St. John's, NF: Creative Publishers, 2000), pp.13-17 and Prim and McCarthy, Angry Seas, pp.69-74.

[301] Parsons, Raging Winds, p.14.

spotted by the schooner *Irene*. The schooner took them to Coachman's Cove, from which they went on to LaScie and were then taken home on the coastal steamer *Virginia Lake*.

Survivors were left with nothing as everything they owned went down with the ship. Upon their arrival in Coachman's Cove, the community's parish priest, Father Sheenan, did all he could for them. Several women were now widows- one woman with six children lost her husband - and all were without the necessities of life - food, clothing, money.[302] Father Sheenan went from house to house until he had enough clothing for the survivors and he did not rest until everything that could be done for them was accomplished.[303] An appeal for relief was also immediately launched on their behalf. While the community did not ignore the needs of survivors, neither did the Newfoundland government. In LaScie, the survivors were placed in lodgings by the magistrate and were provided with passage home on the coastal steamer Virginia Lake. The passengers of that vessel collected $31.20 for their needs.[304]

The *Rose* did not carry enough boats for all on board yet there was no indication the schooner was required to do so. The Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 permitted the Board of Trade to make rules regarding the number of life-boats to be carried by British

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[302] "The Schooner *Rose* Disaster," (Letter to the Editor), The Evening Telegram, 2 July 1894, p.4.

[303] "A Noble Hearted Priest," the Twillingate Sun, 7 July 1894, p.2.

[304] "Account of the Loss of the Schooner *Rose*, of Spaniard's Bay" The Harbor Grace Standard, 29 June 1894, p.4

ships based on their class and mode of construction.[305] Since the Board's regulations did not require there be sufficient life-boats for all on board, as was made painfully clear with the sinking of *Titanic* in 1912, there was no reason to believe the *Rose* violated any regulation. Did the regulations even apply to a schooner as small as the *Rose*? This issue was not explored as the human and economic toll of the disaster took precedence.

3.5.4 The *Maggie* - November 1896

A horrible incident took place on November 6, 1896, when the 57 ton schooner *Maggie* and the steamship *Tiber* collided just outside the St. John's narrows.[306] The *Maggie* had left Brooklyn, Goose Bay in Bonavista Bay with a cargo of 1000 quintals of fish for St. John's, as well as 23 people on board (9 crew and 14 passengers). Although both lights in the schooner were burning, a navigational mistake led to the collision. According to Rosalind Power, the crew of the *Maggie* expected the steamer to go straight off from the Narrows, a practice often followed by ships which were traveling across the Atlantic.[307] Unknown to the crew of the *Maggie*, the *Tiber* was actually heading to Canada, which was probably why the steamship stayed close to the south side entrance to the Narrows and headed towards Cape Spear. When the vessels collided, the *Tiber* smashed into the starboard side of the *Maggie*, cutting right through the ship, taking the

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[305] See Section 427 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, in Pulling, The Shipping Code, p.176.

[306] See Power, A Narrow Passage and The Evening Telegram, 7, 9,10, 12, 17 November 1896.

[307] Power, A Narrow Passage, p.97.

spars and stern right off. The ship immediately began to fill with water and sank - "the toil of many months going down with her. Fish, effects, and cash, all gone."[308] While some in the cabins below were crushed in the impact, others struggled to survive in the cold November water. Their rescue was aided by two men, who managed to get aboard the *Tiber*, and a Brigus schooner. After some delay, a boat from the *Tiber* was launched as well. All casualties of the collision occurred on the *Maggie*; more than half of those on board, thirteen people (nine men and four women), drowned. Many of them were married with several children to support - William Ash left a widow and nine children, William Diamond left a widow and five children, Moses Lethbridge left a widow and five children, while Sarah Gullage's death left three children without their mother.[309] The ten survivors were taken to the East End Police Station where they were tended to by Inspector Grimes and his men, as well as the Attorney General and Sir W.V. Whiteway. They were provided with warm clothing, medical attention, and support since many of the rescued were panic-stricken and incoherent.[310]

In 1897, a relief fund was established for the widows and orphans of those lost on the *Maggie*.[311] It provided six widows and seventeen children with some support for up to five years (see Appendix 3 for the details of the fund). The community also responded

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[308] "Thirteen Persons Drowned," The Evening Telegram, 7 November 1896, p.4.

[309] Power, A Narrow Passage, p.98.

[310] "Thirteen Persons Drowned," The Evening Telegram, 7 November 1896, p.4.

[311] See "*Maggie* Relief Fund," The Evening Telegram, 5 June 1897, p.4 and "*Maggie* Relief Fund," The Harbor Grace Standard, 25 June 1897, p.4.

to the tragedy by commemorating the incident in poetry and song.[312]

At ten forenoon November five the *Maggie* sailed away
From her happy home near Brooklyn in Bonavista Bay

Light winds did waft her on her course; light hearted was her crew,
And Friday evening off the Narrows the city came in view.

Our hopes ran high; our hearts were glad; we soon would tred the shore,
And turn to catch the fruits of toil upon the Labrador.

The city lights did seem to greet and welcome us to town,
When Captain Blundon cried, "My boys, there's a steamer bearing down."

Like a raging monster fierce that seeks her prey to get,
She bore straight on us and we hoped her course would alter yet.

We shouted aloud in wild despair - too late - an awful crash!
Next moment o'er our shattered craft the hungry waves did dash.

The scene that followed (then) - O God - is branded on my brain,
And rather would I join the drowned than witness it again.

The cries of sweethearts pierced the air in a desp'rate fight for life,
When a brother saw a brother sink and a husband saw a wife.

And the name of the steamer *Tiber* will fall in days to come
On the ears of the Brooklyn people like a sound of a funeral drum.

The Newfoundland government's response to the loss of the *Maggie*, in addition to aid provided on the night of the collision, was to immediately convene an official marine court of inquiry.[313] Since the *Tiber* had been allowed to continue on its voyage

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[312] "The Wreck of the *Maggie*," in Ryan and Small, Haulin' Rope and Gaff, p.42-3. This song is a shorter version of "Loss of the *Maggie*," also cited in Ryan and Small, p.41, as well as Power, A Narrow Passage, p.100.

[313] "The Fatal Collision," The Evening Telegram, 7 November 1896, p.4.

after the collision, the warrants issued for the arrest of Captain Delisle, the mate and lookout man had to be carried out in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Why the ship was not detained is unknown. In the meantime, the *Maggie's* captain reiterated why he followed that particular course and made the assumption he did about the *Tiber's* course. While the captain cited what he believed to be the "unofficial" route followed by vessels entering and leaving St. John's Narrows, some authorities, including the Lloyd's Surveyor, placed some of the blame for the collision on the *Maggie* as well.

> ...Most of the masters of those little schooners give no attention to the rule of the road at sea; that there is little or no room to manage a big ship in changing her course coming in the Narrows; that the small vessels have space and power to put about, and yet they are defiantly kept on across the bows of steamers..... Strict observance of established rules and the exercise of care all around, are what is required.[314]

With the loss of life in this wreck, the public demanded the vigorous prosecution of illegal salvors. After the *Maggie* sank, all of its cargo had floated out of the ship, with some of it surfacing along the shore. When it was discovered that four men - Stewart Garland, Thomas Trenchard, Josiah Dawe, and Robert Evan - had picked up two boxes (containing, among other items, a cash box with money, a watch, purse, and clothing) and did not turn them over to the authorities, they were charged with wrecking [sic].[315] While the motives of the men were unknown, there was no indication that they needed the cargo to survive or feed their families. What made the situation even worse was the

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[314] "Notes of Warning," The Evening Telegram, 12 November 1896, p.4.

[315] See "Secreting Wreckage," The Evening Telegram, 10 November 1896 and Power, A Narrow Passage, p.101.

fact that they knew some of the boxes' contents might have had sentimental value, belonging to either a survivor or a survivor's wife or husband. For their crime, three of the men (Garland, Trenchard, and Dawe) were convicted and sentenced to 100 days imprisonment with hard labour.[316] Why Robert Evan was not convicted is unknown.

3.6 Conclusion

During the late nineteenth century shipwreck was a daily part of the lives of many Newfoundlanders. The effects of such events were explored in chapter three. Residents of some communities provided survivors with food and clothing. Many shipwrecks were commemorated in story and song. The Newfoundland government enacted legislation which addressed some of the circumstances of shipwreck, such as the salvage of cargo. However, it is not enough to simply learn how Newfoundlanders responded to shipwreck, but why they responded to such events in the ways that they did.

During the late nineteenth century Newfoundlanders responded to shipwreck under different kinds of influences, political, economic, and social. A cash-less society existed in many small communities. Fishermen were controlled by the merchants who only gave credit, never cash. The salvage of a wrecked ship's cargo usually brought good fortune into many communities in the form of food, clothing, and sometimes cash. In November 1898, according to the Evening Telegram, some men were able to make as much as fifty dollars for their involvement in the salvage of the *Scottish King*. However, my discussion of the allocation of salvage rewards highlights a problem which was

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[316] "That Wreckage Case," The Evening Telegram, 12 December 1896, p.4.

initially discussed in chapter one. There was a difference between enacting legislation and enforcing it. While the salvage statute provided for reasonable rewards, it was usually interpreted by the legislature and the courts in St. John's. Most state officials knew little of the poverty in which many fishermen, seafarers, and their families lived. Such contempt was also apparent in regards to the provision of poor relief on the island. The destitute, which include shipwrecked widows and orphans, depended on this relief, yet the Newfoundland government failed to make poor relief official. The poor still had to depend on the community for informal support. Appeals for relief were made on behalf of widows and orphans who lost their main breadwinners to shipwreck.

However, the government did not always ignore the needs and expectations of its residents. I discussed how, in the late nineteenth century, most Newfoundlanders expected the state to take responsibility for the destitute. While the government failed to legislate for poor relief, they were aware of the affect of such provisions on their popularity. They provided shipwrecked seafarers with the necessary provisions and subsistence, and paid for their passage home. Shipwreck in the late nineteenth century raised questions of responsibility. It raised humanitarian and moral questions of how to respond to shipwreck victims, survivors, and their families. It raised questions of material significance involving salvage, property, and reward. Chapter three provides a broad overview of how Newfoundlanders responded to shipwreck in the late nineteenth century. Through the case studies which follow, it is possible to explore further some aspects of this community response.

Chapter 4: Shipwreck, Its Impact on Trepassey

Shipwreck was an ever present reminder to Newfoundland fishermen, seafarers, and their families of the hostile environment in which they lived. Trepassey was one of Newfoundland's communities where people felt a strong sense of pride in having stoically endured hard times. This gave residents a "a strong sense of community - a feeling that 'we're all in this together'."[317] Through the circumstances of shipwreck it is possible to explore this sense of community. The noteworthy thing is that of the wrecks during the late nineteenth century none involved local men and there were no casualties of people from the community. Even so shipwreck was an important facet of the community's history and culture. Trepassey residents looked after shipwreck victims and survivors. They recorded stories and songs to commemorate incidents of shipwreck. They took part in the legal and illegal aspects of salvage. The social and economic dynamics of a late nineteenth century Newfoundland community are more fully brought into our understanding by examining a place like Trepassey and its residents responses to shipwreck.

4.1 The Community

Trepassey is a small fishing community located on the southern part of

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[317] Dona Lee Davis, "Woman the Worrier: Confronting Feminist and Biomedical Archetypes of Stress," Women's Studies, Vol.10, No.2 (1983), p.137. This article did not refer specifically to Trepassey, but some of Davis' insights about the people who live in fishing communities are still useful.

Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula between Cape Race and Cape Pine.[318] Its name was derived from the French word "trepass", meaning the dead or departed; an appropriate name since persistent fog and a dangerous landscape have made this part of the island known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic."[319] I referred to the hazards of this area in chapter one. The mixture of the cold Labrador current with the warm Gulf Stream created variable currents and fog. The currents forced ships dangerously close to shore, while the fog inhibited the ability of seafarers and fishermen to steer their ships in the right direction. Since these hazards contributed to many shipwrecks, they caused grief to seafarers and fishermen alike. Trepassey residents were familiar with the circumstances of shipwreck because they lived in close proximity to Cape Race's perilous environment.[320] In fact, the prevalence of such incidents led residents to call repeatedly for improved preventative measures at Shag Rock Shore and Gull Island Point.[321] The occurrence of several shipwrecks, especially those involving the *Lantana* in 1891, *Texas* in 1894, *Sunrise* in 1895, *Capulet* in 1896, *Delta* in 1899, and *Heligoland* in 1900, prompted them to request the establishment of a lighthouse at Shag Rock Shore and

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[318] See "Map 1 - Trepassey," in Appendix 1, drawn by Harold Fleet, Paradise, NF, 2002.

[319] See Coish, Distant Shores, p.67 and Pennell and Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage, p.9.

[320] Encyclopedia, Volume One, pp.333-334 and Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume One, p.1.

[321] See "Map 1 - Trepassey," for their location.

either a lighthouse or fog alarm at Gull Island Point.[322] The concern for shipping safety exhibited by Trepassey residents, as well as the Newfoundland government's response to these concerns, will be discussed later in the chapter. To understand how shipwreck affected Trepassey and its inhabitants, let us first explore this community - its people, economy, and way of life.

During the seventeenth century Trepassey served as a summer fishing station and supply depot for both the English and French migratory fisheries. Settlement of the community was influenced by a variety of foreign events. The signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 granted the French fishing privileges in Newfoundland in an area which became known as the French Shore.[323] As French settlers were given the option of either moving to the French Shore or staying in other communities on the island and becoming British subjects, many of them eventually left the Trepassey area. According to anthropologist Nemec, by the 1720's, Trepassey had become a major center of the

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[322] For the wreck of the *Lantana* see "Loss of the *Lantana*," The Evening Telegram, 5 January 1891, p.4, "Wreck of the Brigt. *Lantana*," The Colonist, 13 January 1891, and "The *Lantana* Tragedy," The Evening Herald, 12 January 1891. For the wreck of the *Texas* see "Wreck of Another Ocean Traveller," The Evening Telegram, 5 June 1894, p.4. For the wreck of the *Sunrise* see "A Steamer Ashore," The Evening Telegram, 19 July 1895, p.4. For the wreck of the *Capulet* see "The Lost *Capulet*," The Harbor Grace Standard, 26 June 1896, p.4 and "Marine Disaster. The S.S. *Capulet*," The Evening Telegram, 23 June 1896 (also available in the Newfoundland Historical Society Shipwreck Files (Box "Shipwreck Files #1-4, File #2a). For the wreck of the *Heligoland* see "Ashore and Crew Lost," The Harbor Grace Standard, 19 January 1900, p.4.

[323] See Treaty of Utrecht [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador on-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/83/8311.htm; Internet: accessed 30 April 2002.

English migratory bye-boat and bank fisheries.[324] The American Revolution was another colonial event which affected settlement in many Newfoundland communities, including Trepassey. The war disrupted both trade and the migratory fishery. The British government had to maintain over 70,000 troops in North America. Several ships were therefore required to transport the men and their provisions, including food and ammunition, across the North Atlantic.[325] As the number of ships and men involved in the war increased, there were not enough to prosecute trade and the migratory fishery. In Newfoundland, this meant that merchants were forced to rely on resident fish supplies which, in turn, encouraged development of a resident economy on the island.[326] At this time, due to harsh conditions at home, many Irish families also began to emigrate to Newfoundland and settled on the island's southern shore. By 1800, Trepassey's resident population had evolved from one with English and French ancestry into one which was mainly Irish, creating a predominantly Irish Catholic settlement.

4.1.1 Its People and Economy

During the late nineteenth century Trepassey's fishermen worked independently

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[324] Thomas Nemec, "Trepassey 1505-1840 A.D.: The Emergence of an Anglo-Irish Newfoundland Outport," The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol.69, No.4 (March 1973), p.20.

[325] Hope, British Shipping, p.236.

[326] See Cadigan, Hope and Deception, pp.20 & 24 and Hope, British Shipping, pp.236-37.

along the shore and did not take part in the Bank, Labrador, or seal fisheries.[327] Within their small fishing community of 684 people, there were 180 fishermen catching and curing fish, as well as 206 fishermen cultivating land.[328] As they fished from shore, they did not need large schooners to pursue their occupation. The type of boat used by Trepassey's fishermen depended on their needs, the equipment available for use, and how much they could catch with it.[329] Punts and dories carried up to two men who intended to use either jiggers (a lead fish lure attached to a long hand-line) or trawls (fixed long lines with baited hooks set at intervals).[330] To use the cod seine (a large net with weights) or the cod trap (a fixed box-shaped trap with a length of net which stretched from shore) it was necessary to use a skiff. A skiff was a much larger boat, about twenty-five to thirty inches deep, crewed by three to seven men.[331] While punts and dories carried up to fifteen quintals of fish (approximately 1700 pounds), the larger

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[327] See Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), p.402 and Newfoundland, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1891 (Volume Two) (St. John's, NF: J.W. Withers, 1893), p.368. The census specifically states the number of ships and men employed in each aspect of the fishery. According to the census, there were no Trepassey men or ships involved in the Bank, Labrador, or seal fisheries.

[328] Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), pp.398 & 402.

[329] Maxine B. Ennis, "Inshore Fishing Boats Used on the Avalon and Burin Peninsulas," Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives [MUNFLA] ms 72-244, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3400, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972, p.30.

[330] Thomas Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900: An Ethnohistorical Reconstruction of Anglo-Irish Outport Society," The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol.70, No.1 (June 1973)," p.20.

[331] Ennis, "Inshore Fishing Boats," p.22-23.

skiffs carried over thirty quintals (3360 pounds).[332]

In chapter three I referred to the knowledge many Newfoundland fishermen and seafarers possessed about their maritime environment.[333] The fishermen of Trepassey were skilled mariners and navigators.[334] While at sea and at home they followed weather patterns by studying the clouds, sky, and the wind. This enabled them to forecast the next day's weather with a high degree of accuracy. Each fisherman had a weather glass in his home and on his boat which warned him of oncoming gales.[335] Once at sea in foggy weather, which was a common occurrence off the southern Avalon Peninsula, fishermen used either a compass to find their way or followed familiar landmarks as a guide. As they were familiar with the area, they knew how the sea washed against the rocks in certain places and they recognized the distinguishing characteristics of the cliffs and shoreline. According to Paul Halleran, there were very few boats lost since these men had "a lot of experience with the sea."[336]

4.1.2 Economic Crisis

Newfoundland's population had increased throughout the nineteenth century. The

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[332] "Cape Race to St. Vincent's," p.7.

[333] See chapter three, section 3.1 "A Benevolent Response".

[334] Paul Halleran, "The Way of Life of the People of Trepassey During the 1800's and Early 1900's," MUNFLA ms 77-298, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3400, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977, p.11.

[335] Halleran, "Way of Life," pp.11-12.

[336] Halleran, "The Way of Life," p.11.

fishery experienced problems, according to Rosemary Ommer, because there were too many people fishing in and around the island.[337] The decline of the fishery affected many Newfoundland communities during the late nineteenth century, including Trepassey. In 1890, as the trap-fishery closed with poor results, the Evening Telegram reported that there were several starving families in the community who were destitute and dependent on government relief for survival.[338] The population of Trepassey and its fishermen increased during the late nineteenth century. By 1901, the community's population had risen to 792 people.[339] It was 684 in 1891. According to Nemec, this was due mainly to natural increase as both census returns and parish registers indicated little migration into the community.[340] The number of fishermen catching and curing fish had risen from 180 to 227 and the number of fishermen cultivating land had risen from 206 to 222.[341]

While the late nineteenth century saw an increased number of fishermen vying for the resource, it also saw some of them using improved fishing gear to catch more fish. In Trepassey, according to Nemec, there was a considerable technological and economic

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[337] See Ommer, "One Hundred Years." For a discussion of Ommer's work see chapter two, section 2.2 "The Concept of Community".

[338] See The Evening Telegram, 17 April 1890, p.1 and 5 August 1890, p.1.

[339] See Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), p.398 and Newfoundland, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1901 (Volume One) (St. John's, NF: J.W.Withers, 1903), p.380.

[340] Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.20.

[341] See Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), p.402 and Newfoundland, Census 1901 (Volume One), p.384.

gap between fishermen who used punts or dories and those who used skiffs.[342] Skiffs were much larger than punts and dories and therefore capable of carrying more fishermen. The cod seine and cod trap could only be used in skiffs due to their weight and size. Therefore, since they used more men and better equipment, those who owned skiffs were able to catch more fish. Several historians, such as Cadigan and Ommer,[343] discuss how residents of nineteenth century Newfoundland communities had to balance their family's needs with the needs of the community as a whole. The needs of the family often came first. If taking care of family in Trepassey meant using bigger boats and better fishing gear, did the decline of the fishery influence economic and social tensions in the community? If so, how did these tensions affect the community's response to shipwreck?

Nemec characterizes Trepassey as a community with continuing cohesion and solidarity.[344] My research revealed a collective response in such things as the burial of shipwreck victims and treatment of shipwreck survivors. However, questions still remain regarding the circumstances of, and procedures followed for, the salvage of cargo. There were several incidents of legal and illegal salvage in the community in the late nineteenth century.[345] While most of these incidents could not have involved all residents in the

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[342] Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.20.

[343] See Cadigan, Hope and Deception and Ommer, "Rosie's Cove."

[344] Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.16.

[345] Refer to later sections in this chapter for a discussion of incidents involving the wrecks of the *Alsacoe*, *Montauk*, *Oscar Wendt*, and *Texas* in 1890, 1891, 1893, and 1894 respectively.

community, the evidence does not indicate who was involved. How did people become involved in salvage? Were they chosen by the wreck commissioner? According to statute, the wreck commissioner could choose any people that he thought were necessary to assist him.[346] It is unknown if he chose salvors on the basis of need. Shipwreck was economically beneficial, yet was this the case for all residents? Did Trepassey's continuing cohesion and solidarity, as Nemec sees it, remain prominent during times of crisis? The needs of the family came first in many Newfoundland communities, at least according to Cadigan and Ommer, but it is not known whether this was the case in Trepassey. Although I would like to suggest that Trepassey residents, regardless of tensions which existed in the community, worked together to achieve economic benefits from shipwreck, the evidence in favour of this argument is sparse.

4.1.3 Its Social Organization

Social organization in Trepassey revolved around the church, government, and fishery. Residents of the community were connected by their dependence on the sea, but also by the fact that they were predominantly Roman Catholic. In 1891, there were 679 Roman Catholics and 5 Church of England members, while in 1901 there were 786 Roman Catholics and only 6 Church of England members.[347] Although the Roman

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[346] Chapter 122 (Of Wreck and Salvage) in Newfoundland, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.905.

[347] See Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), pp.398 & 401, Newfoundland, Census 1901 (Volume One), p.380 and Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.20.

Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's included Trepassey as part of the parish of St. Mary's until 1901,[348] the town had its own priest and church from 1842. The church was the focal point in this settlement; a place where people came together to worship and re-affirm their connection to each other and their community. Reverend William Born, the town's parish priest, was considered to be at the very apex of the social scale. According to Nemec, the parish priest, by virtue of his spiritual role, "held a social position above that of anyone else - the merchantocracy included. Even visiting politicians and dignitaries did not inspire greater fear or awe."[349] When Bishop Howley visited the community in 1896 residents conveyed their admiration for the church.[350] He received an extravagant welcome. According to the Evening Telegram, lights on every house and ship in the harbour were illuminated and overall, the "reception at Trepassey was as good as could be given in any part of the island."[351]

There were some Newfoundland government officials who lived and worked in small communities around the island in the late nineteenth century. Officials living in Trepassey, many of whom were born and raised in the community, included a magistrate (Robert H. Carey), constabulary (Constables William Bailey in 1890 and Michael Sullivan in 1891), a postmaster (J.J. Murphy, who was also the telegraph operator), a

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[348] Personal Communication, Larry Dohey, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, Newfoundland. I thank him for his advice and suggestions.

[349] Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.19.

[350] See "At Trepassey," The Evening Telegram, 7 September 1896, p.4.

[351] "At Trepassey," The Evening Telegram.

wreck commissioner (Augustus Simms), as well as fishery suppliers, doctors, planters, and members of the House of Assembly.[352] When shipwreck affected Trepassey, many of these officials played some role in it. This will be explored in later sections. However, unlike many other small Newfoundland communities, there were no merchants in Trepassey during the late nineteenth century.[353] The community's fishermen had to go to St. John's to obtain their supplies of food and salt from the merchants there.

4.2 A Constant Reminder/Burial of the Dead

According to Rediker, most seafarers and fishermen went to sea knowing the risks they faced as "even in calm seas the sailor could not escape the reminders of his own mortality."[354] Seafarers, fishermen, and their families knew what could happen at sea. Shipwreck was a constant reminder of the hostile environment which some residents of maritime communities encountered daily. Trepassey residents, especially those with family or friends at sea, could not escape reports of shipwreck and the horrendous events which were often recounted in the newspapers. These reports detailed the destruction and damage which afflicted many vessels and might have left disturbing images in the minds

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[352] See The Newfoundland Almanac: For the Year of Our Lord 1890-92 (St. John's, NF: W.J. Herder, 1889 & 1891), pp.34, 87, 90-3, 98,100-101,105-109,114, Charles D. McAlpine, McAlpine's Newfoundland Directory, 1894 to 1897 (Saint John, NB: McAlpine Publishing Co., 1894), pp.68-9, 72, & 629, and Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.19 & 22.

[353] Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.18. There were no merchants listed in the census returns between 1874 (when two were listed) and 1901 (when three were listed).

[354] Rediker, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, p.194. For information about the risks of seafaring also see Sager's Seafaring Labour, pp.222-244.

of many readers.

When people were fortunate to survive a shipwreck in and around Newfoundland, they sometimes found comfort in many of the colony's communities. Recounting his experience of shipwreck and survival, R.C. Dowie commented on the hospitable treatment he and his crew received from the people of Trepassey during the mid-1890's.[355] The destitution which prevailed in the community at that time did not stop people from sharing what little they had with those in need. They took the shipwrecked into their homes and fed and clothed them until further provisions could be obtained or arrangements made for their transportation.[356] This was what could be done for the living. What happened when residents of the southern Avalon Peninsula found wreckage or shipwreck victims near their communities? In January 1891, while walking along the cliffs at Shag Rock, St. Mary's Bay, Michael Lundrigan saw wreckage and two mangled bodies on the beach below.[357] The wreck was later discovered to be the *Lantana*, a brigantine traveling from New York to St. John's with seven people on board. By the time Constable Sullivan arrived from Trepassey, a third body had drifted ashore with its

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[355] R.C. Dowie, "My First Shipwreck," Chamber's Journal, Vol.12, No.597 (June 8, 1895), p.368.

[356] Shannon M. Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore [In Trepassey]," MUNFLA ms 79-565, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3400, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979, pp.9-10.

[357] See "The *Lantana* Tragedy, What Trepassey Says," The Evening Telegram, 5 January 1891, p.1, The Harbor Grace Standard, 6 January 1891, and Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four, p.67.

arms frozen around a broken mast.[358] No one survived the wreck and four remaining bodies were eventually recovered. The remains of all victims were coffined and buried and a short service was conducted by Father Stephen O'Driscoll, the area's parish priest.[359]

The wreck of the *Lantana* provides indications of how the residents of Trepassey, as well as neighbouring communities, responded to shipwreck. Although the wreck had occurred on the rocks below a cliff over three hundred feet high, rescuers did not hesitate to risk their lives by climbing down this cliff to recover the bodies of the men lost. Their efforts, as well as those of others in the community, were recognized in the Journal of the House of Assembly which listed several payments to residents for services provided to the victims of the *Lantana*.[360] Constable Michael Sullivan of Trepassey was paid $7.75 for his services. There were also payments for coffins and a hearse for the crew ($4.00), payments for the coffin, linen and shrouding for five bodies ($16.35), as well as payments to several individuals for unidentified services.

The events which occurred following the loss of the *Lantana* demonstrated that the shared experience of shipwreck brought people together for the common good. When wrecks were reported in the Trepassey area, it was not uncommon for men to go out in fishing vessels, endangering their own lives, if there was life to be saved or a body to be

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[358] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four, p.68.

[359] Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four, p.68.

[360] See Newfoundland, Journal, 1892, pp.289-310.

recovered for burial.[361] The remains of four of the *Lantana's* men did not wash ashore, but rather were only recovered by rescuers who swept the bottom with a cod-seine.[362]

The prevalence of foreign ships and crews in the Trepassey area meant residents were in a position to take care of outsiders. This was a task for which they seemed to accept responsibility. One way they did so was to provide a respectful burial for victims of drowning. It was, quite explicitly, a religious burial. Each man who died in the *Lantana* shipwreck was provided with a shroud and coffin. His remains were then properly interred during a service presided over by a priest. While the burial of shipwreck victims was respectful and decent, the fact that a religious burial was chosen suggested much more. The strong religious beliefs of Trepassey residents mandated that they follow certain death and burial customs and provide victims with a religious internment.[363] The writers of several secondary works have been sufficiently impressed by the emphasis on a "Christian" burial to make special note of it.[364] Given the influence of the priest and church in the community, it was, perhaps, understandable.

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[361] See Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore," pp.8-9 and McGrath, "An Ocean Graveyard," p.141.

[362] "Four More Bodies Recovered from the Wreck of the *Lantana*, " The Evening Telegram, 15 January 1891, p.1.

[363] See Brenda M. Deveraux, "Customs and Beliefs Surrounding Death and Burial Practices in Trepassey, Forty to Fifty Years Ago," MUNFLA ms 76-31, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3420, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1976.

[364] See McGrath, "An Ocean Graveyard," p.141 and Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume Four, p.68.

4.3 Cultural Impact

The efforts of Trepassey residents to recover shipwreck victims and give them a proper burial demonstrated the importance of religion among residents. However, their efforts were also indicative of how the effects of shipwreck permeated further into the community's culture. Shipwreck was a constant reminder to fishermen and their families of what could happen to them. Stories and ballads were written about the heroic gestures and loss of life from shipwreck. Songs, such as "The Dead Sailor,"[365] written about a body which washed ashore near Cape Race, shows how the people of Trepassey were reminded that this "dead sailor" was more than a body. Referring to the sailor the composer writes, "your hopes were brighter, you pictured a pleasant home with loved ones gathered round you when you had ceased to roam ..... Alas, how many mundane dreams are rudely crushed like this."[366] While songs such as the one above identified shipwreck as a tragic and sad event, there were others ways in which shipwreck affected communities. In Trepassey, while shipwreck meant bodies washing on shore and survivors to care for, it also brought economic prosperity, new people, and ironically, sometimes humorous experiences. Writing stories and songs were one of the ways Trepassey residents were able to convey the overall impact of shipwreck on their community.

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[365] This song is included under "Shipwreck Ballads". See pp.18-19.

[366] English, "Personal Papers," (Folder #12), pp.412-13.

4.3.1 Stories

Stories of wreck and rescue were common in Trepassey's oral culture. They reminded residents of a particular event and enabled them to convey, to future generations, how they responded to shipwreck. The September 1887 wreck of the *Maglona*, for example, was the occasion for documenting the heroism of some Trepassey men.[367] The ship, hindered by fog in the vicinity of the southern shore, was driven ashore into a gulch about 300 feet deep. The crew tried to launch a boat from their ship, but it was swamped by waves. They had no choice but to jump from their vessel to an island rock which helped form the gulch. As they clung to the rock for safety, they were surrounded by high cliffs and raging waters. It was fortunate for them that two Trepassey men, Thomas O'Neill and John Kennedy, saw the ship run ashore. Realizing the men were trapped on the rock, Thomas O'Neill decided to swim to them with a rope. Although a dangerous and challenging endeavor, O'Neill was able to reach the rock where the men were stranded and secure the rope. The shipwrecked men were then able to use it to reach shore safely.

According to Trepassey residents Debbie Pennell and Jerome Kennedy, stories

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[367] See "Brave Rescue Near Trepassey, 1887," (Offbeat History), The Evening Telegram, 4 May 1976 (copied from the Newfoundland Historical Society Shipwreck Files, Box #2, File No.6 (Shipwrecks), Pennell and Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage, pp.43-44, and Helen O'Neill, "Newfoundland Folklore Survey: Various Subjects," MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card 89-353 (compiled for Folklore 2300), Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1989. While the newspaper listed Thomas Neill as one of the heroes, Trepassey residents Pennell, Kennedy, and O'Neill (whose cites Thomas O'Neill as her great-grandfather) lists his name as Thomas O'Neill.

about shipwrecked men were told in the community with a "heroic legendary ring."[368] Consider the story which evolved from the early twentieth century wreck of the *Heligoland*, a ship which ran ashore near St. Shotts.[369] The circumstances of the shipwreck were previously discussed in chapter two. The details of it were passed down from generation to generation so they would not be forgotten. The story of the wreck of the *Heligoland* was told in vivid imagery. There were references to the raging waters and the seaman clinging to the foremast. The helplessness felt by those on shore was invoked and, finally, the stoicism of the young seaman was underlined (he chewed a piece of tobacco even as he faced certain death). This fearlessness may well have been common amongst seafarers and fishermen. This story allowed residents to record a visual memory at a time when no photograph was available to them and one might argue, no picture would do justice to the events witnessed by the human eye.

4.3.2 Shipwreck Ballads

In Trepassey, it was common for famous wrecks to be recorded or remembered by residents in songs or verse.[370] One such example was the "The Kegs of Madeira,"[371] composed by Trepassey fisherman Mike Kennedy. This song refers to a shipwreck with a

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[368] Pennell and Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage, p.9.

[369] See Pennell and Kennedy, To Learn About Our Heritage, p.37 and "The Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 13 January 1900, p.4. The legend lists the wreck as occurring in 1903, but an examination of several newspapers documents the wreck as occurring in 1900.

[370] Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore," p.6.

[371] Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore," p.12.

lost cargo of the Portuguese rum, madeira and it tells us a humorous story of what happened in Trepassey after the cargo was recovered. The name of the vessel and date of the wreck are unknown. Also unknown are any particulars of the crew and how residents of Trepassey obtained the cargo. According to Shannon Orr, at the time when it is thought this wreck occurred, the postman Gus Molloy served as the only means of communication between St. Shotts and Trepassey.[372] Since a telephone line was not constructed along the southern shore to Cape Race until 1921, this would seem to place the wreck as occurring sometime during the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries.[373] The memory of this incident has been sustained by the song.

Shur that was a winter I'll never forget!
There was n'ar a one minded the cold an' the wet,

When the Portugee vessel was wrecked at St. Shotts!
Well, they came from Trepassey wit saucepans an' pots,

When the kegs o' Madeira came floatin' ashore,
And Trepassey was never the same any more!

They filled ev'ry auld jar they could borrow or forage,
And they poured it all over the brewis an' the porridge.

There was n'ar bit o'grub that the wine wasn't good in,
The pies an' the cakes an' the blueberry puddin.

They _____ it into a grand bit o' tonic,
(For the coughin' an' wheezin' was nothing but chronic).

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[372] Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore," pp.13-14.

[373] Telegraph and Telephone Companies [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador On-line]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/81/8148.htm; Internet: accessed 27 July 2002.

Shur, they even made candies wit wine in the centers.
Make a long story short - they lived on it the winter!

And I'm after hearin' a day never passes
But a child turns his nose up at bread an' molasses!

Since them kegs o' Madeira came floatin' ashore,
Trepassey will n'ar be the same anymore.

An I torments me wife (an' she temperate too),
"Twas that wreck at St. Shott's was the ruin of you!"

Although it is not known when he recorded his song,[374] Mike Kennedy's version of these events also revealed a lot about Trepassey. It suggests how Trepassey residents would make use of the shipwrecked cargo which came ashore. While the madeira was certainly enjoyed by many residents, it was also used for cooking and medicinal purposes.[375] More importantly, I believe this song effectively demonstrates how Trepassey residents, such as Mike Kennedy, coped with the circumstances of shipwreck. I previously made reference to the wreck of the *Lantana* and its mangled and naked corpses. Later I refer to Michael Lundrigan's experiences which included carrying human flesh in a bag.[376] The circumstances of shipwreck were often tragic and morbid and it was through humour that the people of Trepassey were able to cope.

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[374] Personal Communication, Anita Best, renowned traditional Newfoundland singer. According to Best, based on the language used, this song is probably a twentieth century composition.

[375] According to the song, Trepassey residents used the rum in pies, cakes, and blueberry pudding. They also used it as a tonic for their "coughin'" and "wheezin'".

[376] "The *Lantana* Tragedy," The Evening Herald, 12 January 1891. See section 4.5 "Safety At Sea" for more about Michael Lundrigan and his experiences.

The dangerous maritime environment which plagued residents of Trepassey was often recorded in song as well. "The Dead Sailor"[377] was written by a school teacher more than seventy years ago about the body of a seaman found on a beach near Cape Race. We know more about this seaman probably because it was a composition put together by a middle-class person. When compared with the "The Kegs of Madeira", this song's formal language and sophisticated tone are apparent.

Whence have you come, O stranger, out o'er the watery main?
Where is the home of your dear ones you never shall see again?
Did you speak the language of the French or the Anglo Saxon tongue,
Or in soft climes of the sunny South were songs of your cradle sung?
Mayhap in pleasant hamlet beside the silvery Rhine,
Or Emerald Sod the first was trod by those torn feet of thine.
Where have those bruised feet wandered, where have you roamed since then?
Into the hurly-burly, into the haunts of men,
Struggling, striving, longing, filled with a feverish strife
To battle with your fellow men the rigged ways of life.
Did you ever dream in your golden dreams that here on a foreign strand
Your corpse would beg a hiding place in the home of a stranger's land?
Ah! No, your hopes were brighter, you pictured a pleasant home
With loved ones gathered round you when you had ceased to roam,
Free from all care and turmoil, a haven of earthly bliss, -
Alas, how many mundane dreams are rudely crushed like this.
And what of the weary watcher who gazes over the main,
The sad-eyed mother with pensive face pressed to the window pane?
Does she start in the dreary midnight as low the candles burn?
Does she murmur a prayer for her absent son to speed his safe return?
Neath the brown hillside in our rugged clime sleeps on her pride and joy,
He is coffined in a canvas sheet, meet shroud for a sailor boy.

4.4 Economic Impact

In the late nineteenth century the Roman Catholic Bishop of St. John's asked

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[377] English, "Personal Papers," (Folder #12 - "Folk Songs"), pp.412-13.

Trepassey's parish priest how the community would survive the winter. According to McGrath, he is said to have responded by saying, "Very well, my lord, with the help of God and a few wrecks."[378] To Trepassey residents, shipwrecks were economic God-sends. It was common to find many ships' items - wood, doors, coal, glasses, skylights, china - used in homes around the community.[379] The dories used by many Trepassey fishermen were sometimes acquired from the wreck commissioner or direct from a shipwreck itself.[380] Such incidents also provided families with food and supplies for the winter.[381] When the S.S. *Texas*, a British steamer 2853 tons gross, ran ashore at St. Shotts in June 1894, residents of Trepassey legally salvaged the cargo. The *Texas* carried approximately 1300 sheep, 250 cattle, as well as 35, 816 bushels of wheat, 8000 boxes of cheese, several boxes of meat, tea, tobacco, bacon, and pine deal.[382] This shipwreck and salvage operation will be discussed in a later section, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that the opportunity to salvage such a large cargo provided many Trepassey families with additional subsistence.

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[378] McGrath, "An Ocean Graveyard," p.141.

[379] Personal Communication, Dr. Thomas Nemec. See also Harding, "The Menace of Cape Race," p.675 and "Trap in the Northern Sea," p.961.

[380] Nemec, "Trepassey, 1840-1900," p.20.

[381] See Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore," p.7 and Gertrude Wells, "Shipwrecks on the Southern Shore, " MUNFLA ms 72-088, unpublished research paper for Folklore 3400, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972, p.16.

[382] The contents of the ship's cargo were listed in both The Evening Telegram, 8 June 1894 and The Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List, 20 June 1894.

Salvaging a wrecked ship's cargo also provided much needed employment to the area. In 1890, according to Magistrate Carey, help was needed to land the wrecked ship *Alsacoe's* cargo.[383] While the magistrate's report did not indicate if the Trepassey men received any payment, I suspect they would have expected something in return for their labour. They therefore probably received either money, food, or some portion of the ship's cargo for their efforts. I previously referred to a report by the Evening Telegram in 1890 which stated that there were several starving families in the community who were destitute and dependent on government relief for survival. Although it is not known which men from the community were involved in the salvage operation, at a time when fish and food were scarce, any provisions would have been welcomed.

Once all on board a ship were safe, or the bodies of those who perished were recovered, Trepassey residents felt it was important to salvage the cargo. Not only could they legally do so, but they believed that cargo which sank to the bottom of the ocean would help no one.[384] While they benefitted from the occurrence of shipwrecks, there is no evidence which suggests that Trepassey residents deliberately lured ships ashore. In fact, there is no clear evidence of wreck-inducing in Newfoundland.[385] According to George Harding, the people of Trepassey did not "wish evil to the vessels which go by

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[383] PANL, Magistrate Court. Southern Circuit. Correspondence. Trepassey, GN 5/3/C/6 (Official Record Magistrate's Court, Trepassey, 1888-1916), Report for August 1890.

[384] McGrath, "An Ocean Graveyard," p.142.

[385] Encyclopedia, Volume Five, p.636.

their coast; but here, as elsewhere in bleak places, they joyfully take the goods the gods provide."[386] When times were hard in Trepassey, especially during the winter when some families might have been on the verge of starvation, residents asked God to send them a wreck. Their children's prayers ended with, "God bless Mommy and God bless Daddy and send us a wreck in the morning."[387]

Regardless of the benefits of salvaging a wrecked ship's cargo, residents of Trepassey were always quick to emphasize that lives were saved first. An analysis of the Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland between 1891 and 1901 revealed an annual "Statement of Expenditure on Account of Shipwrecked Crews" in most of the journal's appendices.[388] According to these statements, the Newfoundland Government compensated some Trepassey residents for taking care of shipwreck victims and survivors. I have already discussed the wreck of the *Lantana* and all that people of the community did for those lost. I referred to payments made to Constable Michael Sullivan, as well as payments to various individuals for coffins, linen and shrouding. Expenditures on burials were common in the area, but when lives were saved the community hosted the shipwrecked seafarers and passengers. In 1891, for example, the government paid $10.70 for the subsistence of eight members of the *Daisy Maud's*

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[386] Harding, "The Menace of Cape Race," p.678.

[387] Orr, "Recitation and Relative Folklore," p.7.

[388] See "Statement of Expenditure on Account of Shipwrecked Crews" in Appendices of Newfoundland, Journal, 1891-1901.

crew.[389] Another payment was received in 1894 when the government paid $7.20 for the subsistence of the crew of the wrecked *Tiger*.[390] While residents of the community did not expect compensation for such good deeds, there is no doubt it was welcomed during periods of destitution. It enabled residents to replace the provisions they gave to those who were shipwrecked. According to the 1891-93 day books of Harbour Grace merchants Albert and Arthur Rogers, bread cost 30 cents and a half dozen eggs cost 18 cents.[391] It was possible that residents of Trepassey could buy such items for similar prices from other merchants as well. A payment of $10.70 or $7.20 was therefore substantial. Compensation in the form of cash also meant residents did not have to depend on merchant credit to replenish their family's resources. They could use the cash to buy food and save any credit they had built up for other items, such as improved fishing gear or supplies.

4.5 Safety at Sea

I previously referred to the dangers of the Trepassey area and the preventative measures subsequently put in place to aid mariners. There was a lighthouse and fog signal in place at Cape Race. There was also a fixed white light placed at Cape Pine in 1851 and an automatic whistling buoy placed at Powells Head, near Trepassey, in

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[389] Newfoundland, Journal, 1891, p.308 - Appendix.

[390] Newfoundland, Journal, 1894, p.265 - Appendix.

[391] PANL, Rogers (Albert and Arthur) Collection, Harbour Grace, MG 893, (Day Book, 1891-93).

1882.[392] However, the occurrence of several shipwrecks in the area during the late nineteenth century highlighted the need for more preventative measures. One of the parts of the southern shore most often noted as dangerous is the area extending from Cape St. Mary's to Cape Pine.[393] Located within this area is the small community of St. Shotts and in its vicinity, Shag Rock Shore and Gull Island Point.[394] The late nineteenth century saw many deadly shipwrecks in this area which gained the attention of the area's residents. In quick succession, ships were wrecked - the *Lantana* in January 1891, the *Texas* in June 1894, the *Sunrise* in July 1895, the *Capulet* in June 1896, the *Delta* in September 1899, and the *Heligoland* in January 1900[395] - yet calls for preventative measures were consistently ignored. Residents of the area complained after each wreck, and each time the Newfoundland government did nothing.

I previously referred to the wreck of the *Lantana* in 1891, one of the worst wrecks on the coast for some years.[396] At that time, several residents from surrounding communities spoke publicly about the need for a lighthouse at Shag Rock Shore. They included Father O'Driscoll (the priest who buried three of the victims), Magistrate Carey

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[392] The Newfoundland Almanac, pp.40-1, 46.

[393] The Harbor Grace Standard, 26 January 1900, p.4.

[394] For this discussion, please refer to "Map 1 - Trepassey," in Appendix 1.

[395] Please refer to footnote #322 for sources of information which state the particulars of each wreck.

[396] "Loss of the *Lantana*," The Evening Telegram, 5 January 1891, p.4.

in Trepassey,[397] as well as Michael Lundrigan (the man who discovered the wreck). In a letter to The Evening Herald, Michael Lundrigan stated,

> this is the fourth time that I have been pulling dead and mutilated bodies over the cliffs and once I had to bring up human flesh in a bag for you cannot bury a man in solid rock and it is too inhuman to let the foxes and birds of the prey devour him. I am sure the government of this country has lavished money in many more foolish ways than this. I often wonder that the Board of Trade did not ask the Imperial Government to do it long ago for there have been hundred of thousands of dollars worth of property lost in that vicinity within the last twenty years all for the want of a lighthouse.[398]

Through his appeal, Lundrigan pointed out a recurring theme in maritime matters; ships and cargo were often considered, by some shipowners and officials, to be more important than the lives of those on board. Lundrigan therefore appealed to those with vested interests in shipping. If the loss of life did not convince the government that something needed to be done, what about the loss of ships and cargo? Attempts to address trade concerns and at the same time, concerns for human life, began during the 1830's. At that time, an average of almost 900 seafarers were lost each year.[399] As a result, the British Parliament appointed Select Committees, in 1835 and again in 1840, to inquire into the increased number of shipwrecks and deaths at sea. In 1854, the British government consolidated all existing shipping legislation into the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854. Subsequently, there were two Royal Commissions, in 1873-74 and 1887, to

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[397] "Wreck of the Brigt. *Lantana*," The Colonist, 13 January 1891.

[398] "The *Lantana* Tragedy," The Evening Herald, 12 January 1891.

[399] Great Britain, Seafarers and Their Ships, p.15.

investigate the causes of unseaworthy ships and loss of life respectively. When Lundrigan made his appeal in 1891, British government officials were involved in legislating many aspects of the shipping industry. By using such powerful language in his appeal, Lundrigan indicated how social expectations had changed by the 1890's. During the early part of the nineteenth century, a philosophy of laissez-faire prevailed which supported the idea that government should not become involved in anything which would prevent the free flourishing of commerce.[400] However, as official concern for seafarers increased throughout the century, so too did the public's concern. By the 1890's, the general public expected the government to listen to and address their concerns. Unfortunately, regardless of Michael Lundrigan's passionate appeal, there was no lighthouse put on Shag Rock Shore and that remained so into the future.

Near Shag Rock Shore is Gull Island Point, another area where residents felt a lighthouse or fog alarm was needed. Identification of late nineteenth century shipwrecks revealed several which occurred in the vicinity of St. Shotts, around Gull Island Point, including - the *Texas* in June 1894, the *Sunrise* in July 1895, the *Capulet* in June 1896, the *Delta* in September 1899, and the *Heligoland* in January 1900. After the loss of the *Heligoland* and all on board in 1900, the commentary in The Harbor Grace Standard described the area's hostile environment.

> People who are not well-acquainted with the locality have expressed a wonder that not a single life was saved. Those who know the place are not surprised that the ship was lost with all hands,

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[400] Hope, British Shipping, p.235.

> when it is remembered that towering cliffs overhang the locality, rising perpendicularly from the sea, and even in calm weather are scarcely approachable. There is no landing place, and when the steamer ran ashore the sea was raging mountains high. Many are the disasters of a similar kind that have happened on this treacherous part of the coast, all of which could have been averted had there been a lighthouse or fog alarm on Gull Island.[401]

As fog was considered to be the cause of each of these wrecks, it would seem that a light or fog alarm might have saved the ships and those lost. While the repetition of incidents of wreck in the area suggested the need for preventative measures, it was not until 1946 that a manual fog horn was installed at St. Shotts by the Newfoundland government.[402] Michael Lundrigan's appeal in 1891, as well as The Harbor Grace Standard's commentary in 1900, highlights the Newfoundland government's lack of response to shipping safety even into the beginning of the twentieth century. Why? In 1900, Newfoundland's economy had still not recovered from the effects of the 1894 bank crash. It was possible that the Newfoundland government, although aware of public concerns, simply could not afford to erect and maintain a lighthouse or fog alarm at either Shag Rock Shore or Gull Island Point.

It was also possible that some Newfoundland government officials might have been waiting for someone else to take care of the problem. Such a tactic was apparent two years earlier in 1897. At that time, the frequency of shipwrecks along the southern

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[401] "Ashore and Crew Lost," The Harbor Grace Standard, 19 January 1900, p.4.

[402] St. Shotts Fog Signal [Fisheries and Oceans Canada]; available from http://www.nfl.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CCG/ATN/HL/avalon/stshotts7/history.htm; Internet: accessed 9 May 2002.

shore led to another plea, one not made by the public, but rather the Government of Canada. In February 1897, the Montreal Marine Underwriters Association, Canadian officials, as well as Lloyds in London cited the loss of the *Texas* and *Capulet,* among others, as evidence of the need for a fog signal at Cape Pine.[403] However, initially they received no reply to their request. Although understanding the delay might have been caused by Newfoundland's recent financial problems, these officials also stated that money should not be allowed to stand in the way of such an important safeguard to navigation. They felt that assistance could be obtained from both Great Britain and Canada.[404] In April 1897 the Newfoundland government finally addressed the concerns of the officials. In a letter signed by F.B.T. Carter, Administrator, dated April 17, 1897, it was stated that the matter would be placed before the ministers for their early consideration.[405] No fog signal, however, was ever established at Cape Pine during the late nineteenth century. Obviously tired of waiting for the Newfoundland government to respond, the Canadian government took the initiative in 1914 and established a fog alarm

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[403] PANL, Governor's Office. Miscellaneous Papers and Despatches. Colonial Secretary's Office Correspondence, GN 1/3/A (1897 - File #9, "Fog Signal. Cape Pine), Letter from the Montreal Marine Underwriters Association to George Hadrill, Secretary, Board of Trade, Montreal, 10 February 1897.

[404] PANL, GN 1/3/A (1897 - File #9, "Fog Signal. Cape Pine), Letter to George Hadrill,10 February 1897.

[405] PANL GN 1/3/A (1897 - File #9, "Fog Signal. Cape Pine), Letter from F.B.T. Carter on behalf of the Newfoundland Government, 17 April 1897.

at Cape Freels (approximately a twenty minute walk from Cape Pine).[406] No signal was established at Cape Pine until the Cape Freels' fog alarm was sold to the Newfoundland government in 1935.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, requests were also made for protection of other areas around Trepassey. Although an automatic whistling buoy was placed on Powell's Head in 1882, tens years later it was deemed necessary to add a light there as well. Several petitions were presented in the House of Assembly to that effect.[407] According to The Evening Telegram, it was determined that such a light would guide ships safely into Trepassey harbour since those which missed the proper entrance had been wrecked on the back or eastern side of the community.[408] The need for a light at Powell's Head was apparent to all who travelled to the community, but it took another ten years before their concerns were addressed. In 1902, the Newfoundland government finally established a light at Powell's Head.[409]

4.6 Legal and Illegal Activities

Both the legal and illegal salvage of cargo were common in late nineteenth

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[406] Cape Pine - History [Fisheries and Oceans Canada]; available from http://www.nfl.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CCG/ATN/HL/avalon/capepine6/history.htm; Internet: accessed 9 May 2002.

[407] "In the Assembly," The Evening Telegram, 7 May 1892, p.4.

[408] "In the Assembly," The Evening Telegram, 7 May 1892, p.4.

[409] Powell's Head - History [Fisheries and Oceans Canada]; available from http://www.nfl.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CCG/ATN/HL/avalon/powlesheads/history.htm; Internet: accessed 9 May 2002.

century Newfoundland communities. Incidents of barratry (the theft or intentional casting away of a vessel), which were not common around Trepassey but nonetheless deserve some mention, will be explored later in this section. After helping shipwrecked seafarers, fishermen, and passengers, Trepassey residents helped themselves by salvaging the cargo of vessels and obtaining lumber, furniture, food, and any other item of value.[410] Although a legal salvor of wrecked property was entitled to receive a "reasonable amount of salvage, including expenses properly incurred,"[411] often many salvors felt the award was unfair. As their families were destitute, they needed much of what they salvaged. The evidence also seems to indicate that some authorities in Trepassey might have been sympathetic to the problems residents faced as there were instances where they turned a "blind eye" to illegal salvage. My examination of several incidents of legal and illegal salvage will facilitate understanding of the dynamics at play during such activities.

4.6.1 Legal Salvage

Trepassey residents were frequently involved in the legal salvage of cargo. The wreck of the *Texas* in June 1894 illustrated the economic importance of shipwrecks to Trepassey. With the steamer fully impaled on the rocks and rapidly filling with water, a telegram was sent to the owners recommending that the ship be abandoned.[412] It was therefore no surprise when, upon his arrival, the wreck commissioner found an

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[410] Personal Communication, Dr. Thomas Nemec. See also Harding, "The Menace of Cape Race," p.675.

[411] See Chapter 122, Newfoundland, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, p.909.

[412] The Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List, 6 June 1894.

abandoned ship and legal salvors waiting for him.[413] Apparently, the captain, officers, and crew had gone to St. Mary's. The wreck of the *Texas* was not unlike most wrecks in the area as it garnered the attention of residents from surrounding communities, including Trepassey. On board the *Texas* were approximately 1300 sheep and 250 cattle, as well as 35, 816 bushels of wheat, 8000 boxes of cheese, several boxes of meat, tea, tobacco, bacon, and pine deal.[414] Since the captain had made no salvage arrangements before leaving for St. Mary's, it was the responsibility of the wreck commissioner to protect the wreck and what was left of the cargo. It had been recommended that the ship be abandoned because it was almost entirely under water. Under these circumstances, any recovery of cargo was risky. According to The Evening Telegram, people had to stand in water up to their waist just to save a few wet boxes of cheese.[415]

A year prior to the wreck of the *Texas*, in 1893, the 477 ton German barque *Oscar Wendt* ran ashore in a dense fog at Pigeon Cove, near Trepassey.[416] While the crew of the ship was saved, there was a dispute surrounding the salvage of its cargo of spruce deals. This conflict did not involve incidents of illegal salvage, but rather a dispute over the

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[413] "Wreck of the *Texas*," The Evening Telegram, 6 June 1894, p.1.

[414] The contents of the ship's cargo were listed in both The Evening Telegram, 8 June 1894 and The Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List, 20 June 1894.

[415] The Evening Telegram, 8 June 1894.

[416] The Evening Telegram, 27 September 1893, p.4. Lists the ship as the *Oscar Wendt*.

amount of salvage to be awarded.[417] According to the Trepassey men involved, since they offered to land the cargo on the halves and pay the duty with a fifth off, their terms were quite reasonable.[418] The other parties involved, however, would not agree to these terms, so the cargo remained in the wrecked ship. Who these "parties" were is unclear; possibly Captain Scharmberg or the ship's owner, N.J. Rodbertus. As the ship filled with water, some of the cargo was either carried out to sea or onto the beach. With the salvage situation now even more risky, the men were indignant to hear the new terms of salvage presented to them. The ship's parties would agree to the landing of cargo on the halves, but also wanted the salvors to pay full duty on the cargo (approximately $2.50 on every thirty deals) and look after the underwriter's portion of it as well.[419]

The legal salvage of cargo from the *Texas* and *Oscar Wendt* demonstrated that the residents of Trepassey were willing and able to follow the appropriate salvage procedures. Although the captain and crew had abandoned the *Texas*, people waited for the wreck commissioner and there was no indication that any illegal salvage took place before he arrived. The wreck commissioner himself commented that the salvors were

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[417] "Cargo of the *Osiar Wendt* Afloat," The Evening Telegram, 2 October 1893, p.4.

[418] Although the statute does not define what it considers to be "reasonable", such terms seem consistent with the salvage of other wrecks, many of which were often salvaged on the thirds or halves. For example, one year later, there was some indication that the cargo of the *Texas* was to be salvaged on the halves as well. Keep in mind, the risk involved to the salvor was usually a factor in any salvage award.

[419] "Cargo of the *Osiar Wendt* Afloat," The Evening Telegram, 2 October 1893, p.4. The previous article listed the ship as Oscar..

quiet and gave no trouble.[420] Although terms of the salvage of the *Texas's* cargo are not known for sure, it was indicated that salvage would be paid on the halves.[421] This seemed fair as the ship's position under water added an element of risk to the salvage operation. The demands of the *Oscar Wendt's* captain or owner therefore seemed very unreasonable. As the delay in salvage created risky circumstances, the salvors were entitled to receive a reasonable award for their efforts. Is having to pay a customs duty of $2.50 on every thirty deals considered to be "reasonable" at a time when the community, and for that matter, entire colony, was experiencing an economic depression?

4.6.2 Illegal Salvage

"'Lives before salvage!'"[422] was the proverb followed on the Cape Race coast. In chapter three, I argued that many Newfoundlanders who illegally obtained wrecked goods only did so because they felt they did not receive the compensation they were entitled to by statute. A wreck in Trepassey meant that residents could obtain items they otherwise could not afford and it was the means through which they could refill cupboards and cellars for the upcoming winter.[423] This still raises the issue, however, of whether or not such activities were justified.

In 1890, an incident of illegal salvage on the wrecked ship *Alsacoe* demonstrated

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[420] "Wreck of the *Texas*," The Evening Telegram, 6 June 1894, p.1.

[421] The Evening Telegram, 8 June 1894.

[422] Harding, "The Menace of Cape Race," p.683.

[423] Patrick Vaux, "The Irishmen of Cape Race," from Centre for Newfoundland Studies Community Pamphlet File "Cape Race."

how some authorities simply ignored the occurrence of illegal salvage.[424] While the wreck commissioner, local constables, and the ship's second officer were looking after the wreck, they observed some men boarding the ship and carrying off several items. Why they did nothing to stop them at that time is unknown. However, as the men returned a second time and broke open the cabin door, they saw they were being watched. They jumped in their boat and headed for Bresta Cove (near Trepassey), but the wreck commissioner, constable, and second officer intercepted them. According to Magistrate Carey, the illegal salvors, who agreed to give up the stolen property only when the three officers signed an agreement that would acquit them, were well-known to the wreck commissioner and constable.[425] It was surprising, however, that the magistrate apparently knew nothing about this initially. In his letter to the Attorney General he stated that neither the wreck commissioner nor constable reported the incident to him. While it is not known how he found out about it, it was apparent that this was one case where some of the authorities of the community turned a "blind eye" to illegal salvage. The wreck commissioner and constable knew the illegal salvors and apprehended them, yet let them go. Unfortunately, I can only speculate as to why they did this. Were these men and their families in dire financial straits? Were the terms surrounding the employment on and salvage of the ship inadequate?

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[424] PANL, GN 5/3/C/6, Letter to Edward Morris, Acting Attorney General, 1 September 1890.

[425] PANL, GN 5/3/C/6, Letter to Edward Morris, Acting Attorney General, 1 September 1890.

The following year, unfair salvage terms might have led to the illegal salvage of a ship's cargo. After the Hogan Line steamer *Montauk* ran ashore at Mistaken Point in August 1891, its cargo was landed by salvors.[426] While the salvors fulfilled their terms of the salvage agreement, to land the cargo on the thirds, the wreck commissioner refused to give them their share until he was ready to do so. Their share included bags of flour. In the time they waited for the wreck commissioner to give it to them it spoiled. According to The Evening Telegram, the flour, which was landed in a wet state, was unfit for use.[427] On August 21, Magistrate Carey received a letter from Premier Whiteway telling him that the *Montauk's* cargo was being robbed and he should therefore take the necessary steps for protecting it immediately.[428] To find out what was actually happening, Carey spoke to the master of the ship. This was revealing as he discovered both the wreck commissioner and Constable Sullivan were once again aware that illegal salvage was occurring. He commented, "I can't comprehend how so much pillage was carried out in the presence of two constables and yet no arrests and no names of wrong-doers given."[429] Once again, two authorities were present yet illegal salvage had taken place. Even more confusing was the fact that the wreck commissioner, who had previously refused legal salvors their share in a timely manner, allowed illegal salvors to benefit from this wreck.

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[426] "Latest By Telegraph," The Evening Telegram, 20 August 1891, p.1.

[427] "The Wreck," The Evening Telegram, 24 August 1891, p.1.

[428] PANL, GN 5/3/C/6, Letter from Premier Whiteway, 21 August 1891.

[429] PANL, GN 5/3/C/6, Magistrate's Report to Attorney General, 29 August 1891.

Some officials chose to enforce the law while others did not. These ambiguities once again highlight the differences between enacted and enforced legislation. The legal salvors were entitled to their share, but the wreck commissioner chose to ignore this fact until he was ready to deal with them. Why he did is unknown. At the same time, those who did not follow the statutory procedures for salvage were ignored by the wreck commissioner and constable, although the law defined them as criminals.

4.6.3 Barratry

While it was not extensively documented in the literature, incidents of barratry, defined in maritime law as intentional misconduct of a ship's master or crew, which might include theft, intentional casting away of vessel, or breach of trust,[430] did occur in Trepassey. When the Nova Scotian schooner *Tiger* ran ashore at Trepassey in September 1893, suspicions were rampant that the ship had been deliberately wrecked.[431] The actions of the captain, as well as the condition of the provisions and ship itself, raised these concerns. The captain made no attempt to try and salvage the ship and had her stripped of all items of value before she could be surveyed. His actions, or lack thereof, seemed even more suspicious when the vessel was surveyed and it was discovered the only damage done to her was three small holes in the bottom. When the holes were

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[430] Barratry [Dictionary of International Trade Terms]; available from http://www.itds.treas.gov/glossaryfrm.html#B; Internet: accessed 7 December 2001.

[431] See "Wreck of the Schooner *Tiger*," The Evening Telegram, 16 September 1893, p.4 and "A Clear Case of Barratry," The Evening Telegram, 23 September 1893, p.4.

plugged and the water pumped out, the ship came off the rocks. There were also inadequate provisions on board the ship for a voyage to Nova Scotia. A quarter barrel of flour, one gallon molasses, two pounds of butter, some pork, and about twenty herring was not enough food for four men on a voyage to Yarmouth. The combination of all of these factors led the authorities to believe this was a case of barratry. Unfortunately, this was where the evidence ended so it is unknown if the captain faced the consequences of his actions.

4.7 Conclusion

The circumstances of shipwreck resonate in all facets of Trepassey's history and culture, yet no residents of the community were victims of it during the late nineteenth century. Why then did shipwreck affect this community in such a profound way? While there is evidence which reveals Trepassey's response to shipwreck, some of what is known comes to us through story and song. In such ways Trepassey residents were able to retain an awareness for future generations of how their community dealt with shipwreck. It was the way in which many shipwrecks were made known. Some of the community's stories recount acts of heroism, such as one by Thomas O'Neill who swam through stormy waters to rescue shipwrecked seafarers. Some stories, such as the one which documents the wreck of the *Heligoland*, serve as a reminder of the loss of life from shipwreck. However, shipwreck in Trepassey was not always remembered as being morbid and tragic. Its occurrence meant there was cargo to be salvaged, both legally and illegally. This provided many families with food and supplies for the winter. In fact,

some of these occurrences have been recalled through humour. The "Kegs of Madeira", composed by Trepassey resident Mike Kennedy, tells us a humourous story of what happened when a cargo of madeira (rum) washed ashore.

In Trepassey, shipwreck meant providing survivors with food and clothing. It also meant burying those whose bodies washed ashore. The residents' burial of unknown shipwreck victims was indicative of their decency, but also their strong religious values. In the interest of safety they indicated a concern for those living outside their community. They demanded more preventative measures be put in place to protect the interests of seafarers, fishermen, and shipowners.

Trepassey was a small fishing settlement during the late nineteenth century. Due to the decline of the fishery, some of the community's residents were destitute and needed food for their families. Shipwrecks were therefore economically important to the community as it meant there was cargo to be salvaged. However, the salvage of a wrecked ship's cargo showed how problems of enforcing shipping legislation were apparent. In both Great Britain and Newfoundland there were differences between legislation on the books and legislation in action. How could officials prosecute shipowners for sending unseaworthy ships to sea when a literal interpretation of the legislation meant that it was the responsibility of the Board of Trade, not the shipowner, to detain an unseaworthy ship? Another problem of enforcement involved the placement of a ship's loadline. As long as its placement was the responsibility of the shipowner, officials were unable to enforce what they considered to be a safe and appropriate

location for the line. In Trepassey, as in other communities, the salvage laws were inconsistently interpreted and enforced. While it seems that Trepassey residents usually followed appropriate salvage procedures, they sometimes simply took what they needed (or wanted) from the cargo which washed ashore. For some salvors, receiving a reasonable reward was difficult. After some wrecks, the occurrence of illegal salvage was ignored. Such uncertainty, and the tensions it created in the community, need to be explored further.

Chapter 5: Shipwreck, Its Impact on Harbour Grace

In previous chapters I explored how some Newfoundlanders responded to shipwreck during the late nineteenth century. My research indicated that residents responded to shipwreck at that time in some common ways. They assisted shipwreck survivors by providing them with money, food, clothing, or medical attention. Some Newfoundlanders wrote stories, songs, and poetry to commemorate the circumstances of shipwreck. At the same time, Newfoundland's policy-makers provided relief and enacted legislation to protect shipwrecked fishermen, seafarers, and their families. However, the response of many Newfoundlanders to shipwreck also showed some of the diversity of Newfoundland communities. Social expectations influenced how people were expected to respond to shipwreck victims, survivors, or their families; economic situations influenced how they were able to respond.

By using two very different Newfoundland communities, Trepassey and Harbour Grace, as case studies, it is possible to examine further how a community's social and economic diversity affected its residents' response to shipwreck. In chapter four I discussed the response of Trepassey residents to shipwreck during the late nineteenth century. While shipwrecks along Trepassey shores involved foreign ships and crews, the shipwrecks which affected Harbour Grace involved its shipowners, fishermen, seafarers, and their families. Residents of Harbour Grace lost family and friends, ships, and fishing gear to shipwreck. While some families, women, and children were left destitute under such circumstances, many Harbour Grace residents still took care of shipwreck victims

and survivors. When five men were lost on the *Lois Jane* in 1891, residents responded to an appeal made on their behalf.[432] They also recorded stories and songs to commemorate incidents of shipwreck. Shipwreck ballads, like "The Ship That Never Came", as well as some which documented the hardships faced by those involved in the Labrador fishery, remain part of the community's culture and history.[433] It is the purpose of this chapter to explore how people in late nineteenth century Harbour Grace responded to shipwreck.

5.1 The Community

According to the Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Harbour Grace[434] was probably named by fishermen who were familiar with the sea port town of Le Havre de Grace in France.[435] The community served as a base for the English migratory fishery during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[436] In 1677, between 330 and 550 people lived there throughout the summer as they prosecuted the fishery.[437] The English and French were at war during the seventeenth century, so life was difficult for residents of Harbour Grace. In 1696, the French attacked the community, among other Newfoundland

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[432] See section 5.2 "A Benevolent Response."

[433] See section 5.4 "Cultural Impact."

[434] See "Map 3 - Harbour Grace," in Appendix 1. Drawn by Harold Fleet, Paradise, NF, 2002.

[435] Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.807.

[436] E.R. Seary, G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin, The Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland: An Ethno-linguistic Study (Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer for the National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No.219, Anthropological Series No.81, 1968), p.49.

[437] Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.808.

settlements, destroying houses and boats in the process.[438] When this war ended in 1713, more people began to settle in the community. As Harbour Grace's economy prospered throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its population increased.

5.1.1 Its People and Economy

With a population of 6466 in 1891,[439] Harbour Grace was commonly known as Newfoundland's "second city."[440] The community served as the economic centre for the Conception Bay region. It was surrounded by smaller settlements, such as Riverhead and Harbour Grace South, which were included as part of Harbour Grace proper for census-taking purposes.[441] Residents of these smaller settlements received credit and/or food and supplies from Harbour Grace merchants as well. Throughout the nineteenth century, Harbour Grace served as both an inshore fishing community and as a home base for the fishery.[442] Many fishermen lived in and worked from the community, going out to

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[438] See Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.808 and Seary; Story; Kirwin, The Avalon Peninsula, p.49.

[439] Newfoundland, Census, 1891 (Volume One), p.44 & 47. This figure includes the populations of Riverhead and Harbour Grace South as well.

[440] The Harbor Grace Standard often used this phrase when referring to the community.

[441] For more information see the Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.823 and Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Four (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications, 1993), pp.602-603.

[442] John Kevin Ash, "Harbour Grace: The Burn That Never Healed," Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archives [MUNFLA] manuscript, 76-298, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3420, Memorial University, 1976, p.46-7.

Harbour Grace Island during the spring and summer to fish, then returning home in the fall. It was also in Harbour Grace that merchants, shipowners, planters, and fishermen gathered to prepare for their fishing voyages and returned with their catch. According to John Ash, there were often so many schooners in the harbour that residents could walk across the harbour on their decks.[443]

By 1800 many of Harbour Grace's residents were involved in shipbuilding, as well as the cod, seal, and Bank fisheries. It was during the 1820's that residents began to take part in the Labrador fishery as well. At that time, fishermen were beginning to experience problems due to the general decline of the Newfoundland fishery.[444] The attractions of a fishery at Labrador were enhanced by the availability of fish, as well as the number of vessels and men available to travel and work there. Merchants and planters used their sealing ships during the off-season to prosecute the voyages to Labrador.[445] Since these ships were able to navigate the ice fields in March it was feasible that they could handle a voyage to Labrador as well. This was the safest and most economical way of engaging in the fishery. By the late nineteenth century the Labrador cod and herring fishery had become an important part of Harbour Grace's economy. It served to supplement the inshore fishery prosecuted by many fishermen and

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[443] Ash, "Harbour Grace," p. 10.

[444] For a discussion of this decline see chapter two, section 2.2 "The Concept of Community."

[445] William English, "Personal Papers of the late L.E.F. English, O.B.E., deposited by his nephew, Bill English," MUNFLA ms 84-570 (Folder #5 - "Shipbuilding in Newfoundland"), Memorial University, 1984, p.114.

their families. Men were employed on the ships which transported the Labrador cod and herring to European or South American markets. There was also employment available to residents in the form of shipbuilding and ship maintenance.[446] With some ships used in both the seal and Labrador fisheries each year, additional repairs and maintenance were often required.

While involvement in any aspect of the fishery posed some risk, prosecuting the Labrador fishery posed one of the greatest to Harbour Grace residents. The Labrador fleet usually travelled through the "Straight Shore" - an area that spanned from Cape Freels to Stag Harbour Run.[447] This area was known as the ship's graveyard of the east coast. The waters there were shallow and covered with an abundance of islands, rocks, and reefs. The area's hazards, which were heightened by the absence of adequate shelter and navigational aids, contributed to numerous wrecks along this coast each year.[448] Although the Newfoundland government established lights on some of the islands in the area[449] - on the Offer Wadhams in 1858, on the North Penguin Islands in 1890, on

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[446] See Donald K. Regular, "History of Harbour Grace Economy," (unpublished paper submitted for History 321, Memorial University, April 1969, printed by the Maritime History Group), pp.15-16 and English, "Personal Papers," (Folder #5 - "Shipbuilding in Newfoundland"), p.118.

[447] See "Map 2 - The Straight Shore," in Appendix 1. Drawn by Harold Fleet, Paradise, NF, 2002.

[448] R.W. Guy, "One Hundred Years of Shipwrecks Along the Straight Shore," The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol.74, No.2 (Summer 1978), p.3.

[449] Guy, "One Hundred Years," p.3 and Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.6.

Baccalieu Island in 1858, and on Cabot Island in 1880 - shipwrecks continued to occur.[450] Once fishermen reached Labrador, the difficulties of navigating an uncharted coast which abounded with rocks, experienced heavy coastal fogs, and was subject to sudden gales was apparent.[451] The nineteenth century saw tremendous losses in life and property due to fierce autumn gales on the Labrador coast. In October 1885, for example, 70 people were killed and over 80 schooners were lost.[452] While the human loss was substantial, so too was the merchant's and fisherman's economic loss, in the form of property and the season's work.[453]

5.1.2 Economic Crisis

Since the early part of the nineteenth century the fishery had been in decline. The decline continued into the 1890's. During the 1890's Harbour Grace residents' prosecution of the Bank, Labrador, and seal fisheries all failed. The Harbor Grace Standard reported that the 1890 Bank fishery was unsuccessful, with catches at least 50

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[450] See chapter three for a discussion of the circumstances surrounding the wrecks of the *Puritan* and the *Pubnico Belle*, wrecked at Cabot Island and Baccalieu Island respectively.

[451] W.A. Black, "The Labrador Floater Codfishery," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol.50, No.3 (1960), p.272.

[452] Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Three (St. John's, NF: Harry Cuff Publications Ltd., 1991), p.224. Also see William English, "Personal Papers of the late L.E.F. English, O.B.E., deposited by his nephew, Bill English," MUNFLA ms 84-570 (Folder #12 - "Labrador"), Memorial University, 1984, p.276.

[453] Refer to section 5.5 "Economic Impact" for a more detailed discussion of the economic impact of shipwreck on residents of Harbour Grace.

percent under those of the previous year.[454] In fact, this fishery's contribution to the community's economy was quickly declining as the south coast, and especially communities such as Grand Bank and Fortune, became the base of the Bank fishery in Newfoundland. Those involved in the Labrador fishery experienced difficulties in 1892 as well. According to The Trade Review, John Munn and Company, one of the largest shippers of herring in Newfoundland, could load only one schooner.[455] The community's involvement in the seal fishery had been declining since the introduction of steamers in 1863. Although Harbour Grace merchants Ridley and Sons, as well as John Munn and Company, invested in steamers, neither firm was able to compete with St. John's, where the entire steam fleet was eventually based in 1896.[456] Ridley and Sons went out of business in 1870.[457] John Munn and Company managed to survive into the 1890's, until it was bankrupted by the bank crash in 1894. The company owed the bank $520,000.[458] The closure of John Munn and Company, as well as the closure of St. John's firms Thorburn and Tessier and Edward Duder and Company, adversely affected

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[454] "The Bank Fishery of 1890", The Harbor Grace Standard, 11 November 1890, p.4.

[455] "Late Labrador Fishery News", The Trade Review, 17 October 1892, p.1.

[456] See Shannon Ryan, The Ice Hunters: A History of Newfoundland Sealing to 1914 (St. John's, NF: Breakwater Books, 1994), p.154,179 and James E. Candow, Of Men and Seals: A History of the Newfoundland Seal Hunt (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites, Canadian Parks Service, Environment Canada, 1989), p.43.

[457] Ryan, The Ice Hunters, p.202.

[458] See Ryan, The Ice Hunters, p.202 and Ryan, "The Newfoundland Salt Cod Trade," p.50.

thousands of families in the Conception Bay region and St. John's. More than 19,000 people depended on these companies for employment and after the bank crash they were out of work.[459] Although brothers William and Robert Munn re-established Munn and Company in Harbour Grace around 1895,[460] the events following the bank crash left many residents of the community holding worthless bank notes.

How did a decline in the fisheries, as well as the closure of one of the community's largest mercantile firms, affect the community? Were there changes in how its residents responded to shipwreck as a result? As was the case in many other Newfoundland communities during the late nineteenth century, problems in the fishery left some residents of Harbour Grace destitute. After the bank crash, many residents were in need of immediate relief.[461] However, the community's benevolent response to those affected by shipwreck seemed unaffected by these circumstances. The events which occurred after several men were lost on the *Lois Jane* and *Greenland*, in 1891 and 1898 respectively, demonstrated the benevolence of many Harbour Grace residents towards shipwreck widows and orphans.[462] Church services were held to mourn the men lost and

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[459] Encyclopedia, Volume One, p. 121.

[460] Munn, William Azariah [Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador online]; available from http://enl.cuff.com/entry/61/6169.htm; Internet; accessed 17 June 2002.

[461] "The Relief Monies," (Letter to the Editor), The Harbor Grace Standard, 1 March 1895, p.4.

[462] See section 5.2 "A Benevolent Response - Appeals For Relief" for a detailed discussion of the events surrounding the loss of men from both ships.

relief funds were established to aid those left behind. Subscriptions to both the *Lois Jane* and *Greenland* Relief Funds were received from people in the community; from all classes and denominations.[463]

5.1.3 Its Social Organization

By the 1830's Harbour Grace was a commercial, diocesan, and judicial centre of, in the words of Shannon Ryan, considerable worth.[464] By the 1890's the community served as the main centre in Conception Bay. There were several important government officials living there, including stipendiary magistrate Thomas Bennett, Head Constable Alex Jackson, several constabulary officers, and the wreck commissioner for the area, G.W.R. Hierlihy.[465] There were several merchants, planters, and businessmen in the community as well. The town's residents held a variety of both middle and working class occupations. According to the 1891 census, there were five ministers, 15 teachers, one lawyer, two doctors, 19 merchants and traders, 106 people solely engaged in office or shop work, 48 people engaged solely in government services, 60 farmers, 589 fishermen who were also cultivating land, 225 mechanics, 657 males catching and curing fish, 134

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[463] For the names of those who contributed to the *Lois Jane* Relief Fund see "Collected on Behalf of Widows and Orphans of Those Lost in Schooner *Lois Jane*, on Labrador in September Gale 1891," (List of Contributions), The Harbor Grace Standard, 18 December 1891. For some of the names of those who contributed to the *Greenland* Relief Fund see The Harbor Grace Standard, 9,15, 22 April and 13 May 1898. The contributions made to both funds will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

[464] Ryan, The Ice Hunters, p.131.

[465] Newfoundland Almanac, pp.34, 87, 90-3, 98,101 and McAlpine, McAlpine's Newfoundland Directory, pp.69 & 72.

females curing fish, 9 engaged in mining, 52 employed in factories or workshops, and 521 otherwise employed.[466]

Denominational divisions existed between residents of Harbour Grace. In 1891 there were 2643 members of the Church of England and 2477 Roman Catholics, and also 1987 Methodists, 156 Presbyterians, 6 Congregationalists, and 97 Salvation Army.[467] Many residents lent their support to several benevolent societies, many of which were church-oriented and philanthropic in nature.[468] They included the Church of England Home and Foreign Mission Fund, the Benevolent Irish Society, the Loyal Orange Association, and the Dorcas Society. As Harbour Grace's clergy responded to the needs of shipwreck victims, survivors and their families they were often aided by members of these organizations.

5.2 A Benevolent Response

In Harbour Grace, the community's response to shipwreck took the form of a willingness to worship together and contribute to those in need. During the autumn months, as the Labrador fishing fleet returned to the community, Harbour Grace residents or members of their families were sometimes the victims of shipwreck. In October 1891, for example, the *Lois Jane* and all five men on board were lost in the vicinity of Cape

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[466] Newfoundland, Census, 1891 (Volume One), p.48.

[467] Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), p.47. This includes residents of Harbour Grace South and Riverhead as well.

[468] See Encyclopedia, Volume Two, p.820-21.

Harrison, Labrador.[469] A memorial service was held so that many residents could pray for those who perished, as well as for those they left behind, in this case, four widows and nine young children: Mrs. George Hawkins and two children, Mrs. Albert Courage and five children, Mrs. Nathaniel Travers and one child, Mrs. Thomas Courage and one adopted child. The last crew member, Thomas French, was unmarried.[470] Although the service was held in the Anglican church, it is unknown whether those who attended represented all residents of the community or only those who were members of that church. Nonetheless, the Reverend John M. Noel, Rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church, issued an ecumenical appeal, asking all members of the community to do what they could to help the families, stating that:

> I am desirous that an effort should be made to provide in some measure for their future and more pressing necessities. I am confident that a generous and sympathizing public, of whatever creed or class, will offer some precuniary help to the bereaved ones - not without consideration of their own immunity from accident and loss during this trying period.[471]

The community's response to Reverend Noel's appeal was overwhelming. Messrs. W. Tapp and Seymour offered to take responsibility for soliciting subscriptions for a relief fund, which opened with the sum of $100.00.[472] Over the next two months, a

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[469] See "Loss of the *Lois Jane* and All Hands," The Harbor Grace Standard, 23 October 1891.

[470] "Loss of the *Lois Jane*," The Harbor Grace Standard.

[471] "Loss of the *Lois Jane*," The Harbor Grace Standard.

[472] The Harbor Grace Standard, 27 October 1891, p.4.

total of $328.61 was collected. According to The Harbor Grace Standard, the widow of Albert Courage (along with her five children) received $120.79, the widow of George Hawkins and her two children received $78.64, while the widows of Thomas Courage and Nathaniel Travers, each having one child, received $64.59 each.[473] While only a one-time payment, the money received by the widows of those lost on the *Lois Jane* was substantial. Throughout the late nineteenth century the Newfoundland government had failed to provide widows with some sort of pension.[474] Moreover, government poor relief at that time was too informal a system on which to depend. This meant that the voluntary community support received by the women who lost their husbands on the *Lois Jane* was essential for the survival of their families. For example, with the price of bread estimated at 30 cents and the price of a half dozen eggs estimated at 18 cents,[475] the donations these women received would enable them to buy food and other essential items.

The language used by Reverend Noel in his appeal was significant. As many residents of Harbour Grace were involved in some aspect of the fishing or shipping industries, they were aware of the risks of working at sea. In fact, these risks were a daily

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[473] "Collected on Behalf of Widows and Orphans (List of Contributions)," The Harbor Grace Standard.

[474] Pensions were not allocated to widows in Newfoundland until 1926. See Linda Cullum and Maeve Baird, with the assistance of Cynthia Penney, "A Woman's Lot: Women and Law in Newfoundland From Early Settlement to the Twentieth Century," in Pursuing Equality: Historical Perspectives on Women in Newfoundland and Labrador, ed. Linda Kealey (St. John's, NF: Social and Economic Papers No.20, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993), p.160.

[475] PANL, Rogers (Albert and Arthur) Collection.

part of their lives. In his appeal, Reverend Noel asked residents to consider their own immunity from accident and loss during this trying period. He was reminding them of these risks; reminding them that "there but for the grace of God, go I." Reverend Noel not only appealed to fishermen and seafarers, but also to the women in the community. Although it was fishermen or seamen who risked their lives daily at sea, it was women (their mothers, wives, daughters, sisters) who were said to bear the emotional brunt of the danger.[476] The concept of "woman the worrier" was a common one in maritime communities because the burden of worry was left to the wife whose duty it was to prepare for the worst every time her husband went to sea.[477]

Several years after the loss of the *Lois Jane*, the S.S. *Greenland* left to take part in the sometimes profitable, but always dangerous, seal hunt. Shipping and sealing, of course, differed and the risks to life were not necessarily the same, but I would suggest that many of the effects of shipwreck and sealing disasters on the community were similar. Whether men died at sea or on the ice, many of them left behind widows and orphans. The community mourned the loss of sealers and established relief funds for their grieving families. Several sealing disasters, including the *Greenland*, were commemorated in poetry and song. I previously referred to such examples in chapter

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[476] Dona Lee Davis, "Occupational Community and Fishermen's Wives in a Newfoundland Fishing Village," paper presented at the 45 Congreso Internacional de Americanistas, Bogota, Columbia, 2 July 1985, p.11.

[477] Davis, "Occupational Community and Fishermen's Wives", p.11.

two.[478]

The *Greenland* disaster occurred in March 1898 when, due to a sudden storm and shift in the ice floe, the captain found he was unable to move the ship to pick up his men. Several of the *Greenland's* men were therefore forced to ride out the storm, stranded on the ice overnight. The result of this chain of events was tragically apparent when on March 26, 1898, the Premier read to the House of Assembly the following message, received from Captain Barbour of the S.S. *Greenland*: "Arrived Bay-de-Verde; wind too heavy to run. Sad misfortune; lost forty-eight men; many more badly frozen; need hospital. Twenty-five dead bodies on board; remainder could not find. Advise where to go."[479] Six of Harbour Grace's men, most of whom left behind widows and orphans, died on the ice: Matthew Wells (age 21) was married with three children, Lorenzo Wells (age 34) was married with three children, Noah Mortimer (age 40) was married with six children, Archibald Courage (age 30) was married with six children, and George Pynn (age 27) was married with three children. William Heath (age 22) was single.[480] Of the six Harbour Grace men who died, only the bodies of Archibald Courage and William

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[478] See "Other Genres To Consider" in section 2.3 "Studies of Newfoundland Shipwrecks".

[479] Newfoundland, Journal, 1898, p.99. For more information on this disaster see The Evening Telegram, 28,29,30 March 1898, The Harbor Grace Standard, 9,15,22 April, 6,13 May, 24 June, 9 September 1898; 10 March 1899, Ryan, The Ice Hunters, pp.306-7, and Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume One, pp.37-43.

[480] See "List of the Dead," The Evening Telegram, 28 March 1898, p.3, "The Funeral of William Heath at Harbor Grace," The Evening Telegram, 29 March 1898, p.1., and Galgay and McCarthy, Shipwrecks, Volume One, pp.69-70.

Heath were recovered. Their bodies were returned to Harbour Grace and funeral and burial services were held there. According to the Harbor Grace Standard, the bodies of both men were coffined and brought to their homes to be waked.[481] This practice was consistent with the mourning practices followed in the community.

Many of Harbour Grace's residents were disturbed by the manner in which the bodies of the victims were cared for in St. John's. According to the Harbor Grace Standard:

> It is said that those whose duty it was to attend to the last sad offices did not do what was necessary and despatched the bodies home in the same state in which they were taken from the steamer. That in one case, when the coffin containing the remains of one who died on the ice that dreadful day, was opened, the spectacle was one that called forth both loud complaint and expression of horror. There was ample time for the proper care to have been taken of the poor bodies and there was too a sufficiency of paid help to have had all done in decency and in order.[482]

It is unknown why the appearance of the men's bodies caused such horror or to which victims the newspaper was referring. However, it is clear that preparation of the deceased's body was considered to be a task of paramount importance.[483] According to folklorist Gary Butler, regardless of community or religious affiliation, there were some

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[481] See "The Funeral of William Heath at Harbor Grace," The Evening Telegram, 29 March 1898, p.1. The wake and funeral of Archibald Courage is reported in this article as well.

[482] "Too Bad," The Harbor Grace Standard, 9 April 1898, p.4.

[483] Pat Jalland, Death in the Victorian Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.211 and Kay Bradbrook, "Ars Moriendi in Newfoundland: A Look at Some of the Customs, Beliefs, & Practices Related to Dying and Death in Newfoundland," (unpublished paper, Memorial University, 1976), pp.9-10.

common funeral rites followed in Newfoundland.[484] Residents of Harbour Grace, for example, believed in having the body properly prepared for the wake by an elderly woman or midwife from the community.[485]

A relief fund was established to aid the families of those lost on the ice. Subscriptions to the fund eventually totaled $17,000. The money raised provided for the widows of the men lost for a period of five years. It provided for the widows' children until they reached the age of fourteen. It also provided for the parents of unmarried men (see Appendix 3 for the details of the fund). Information regarding subscriptions to both the *Lois Jane* and *Greenland* relief funds was found in The Harbor Grace Standard and The Evening Telegram.[486] In chapter one I referred to the work of Jon Press and his contention that Victorian philanthropy was rarely anonymous.[487] People used philanthropy as a means to reflect their standing in the community. According to Sider, publishing the names of those who contributed to such funds was a common occurrence

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[484] Gary Butler, "Sacred and Profane Space: Ritual Interaction and Process in the Newfoundland House Wake," Material History Bulletin, Vol.15 (Summer 1982), p.28.

[485] Bernadette McCormack, "An Interview on Funerals in the Past in Harbour Grace," MUNFLA ms 78-344, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 2000, Memorial University, 1978, p.2.

[486] For information regarding subscriptions to the *Lois Jane* Relief Fund see "Collected on Behalf of Widows and Orphans" (List Of Contributions), The Harbor Grace Standard. For information regarding subscriptions to the *Greenland* Relief Fund see The Harbor Grace Standard, 9,15, 22 April and 13 May 1898, as well as "*Greenland* Disaster Committee," The Harbor Grace Standard, 24 June 1898, p.1 and "*Greenland* Relief Fund," The Harbor Grace Standard, 9 September 1898.

[487] Press, "Philanthropy," p.108. See "Philanthropic Societies" in chapter one, section 1.2 "Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World".

in Newfoundland.[488] Using the example of someone's house burning down, Sider stated that a box would be placed on the counter of a merchant's store and in it people would place money, notes offering furniture, or clothing. They would then write their name and contribution on a list posted near the box, for all to see and judge. According to Sider, help was not only given in outport Newfoundland, but also carefully noted.[489]

Those who contributed to the *Lois Jane* Relief Fund included John Munn & Company (who made a substantial contribution of $100.00), as well as Sheriff A.H. Seymour and individuals from varying backgrounds including planters, fishermen, coopers, and carpenters.[490] Subscriptions to the *Greenland* Relief Fund in 1898 were also received from people of all classes and denominations, both in Harbour Grace and from outside the community.[491] The owners of the ship contributed $500 and businesses such as Baine Johnston & Company and the Bank of Montreal contributed $100 each. Collections were also received from various churches, as well as from the Committee of Shipwrecked Mariners Society of England. Did merchants, such as Munn & Company or Baine Johnston & Company, contribute to such funds because they wanted to help the

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[488] Sider, Culture and Class, p.79.

[489] Sider, Culture and Class, p.79.

[490] For the names of those who contributed to the fund see "Collected on Behalf of Widows and Orphans," (List Of Contributions), The Harbor Grace Standard. These individuals and their occupations can be found in McAlpine, McAlpine's Newfoundland Directory. The directory is also available on the Internet as part of the Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogy Project (Conception Bay North) at http://www.huronweb.com/genweb/nfdata/main_065.htm.

[491] See The Harbor Grace Standard, 9,15, 22 April and 13 May 1898.

families or did they have another motive for their contributions? Was this their way of establishing and maintaining a positive reputation in the community and more importantly, among the fishermen? As I suggested in chapter one, while Harbour Grace merchants might have used such philanthropy to their advantage, whether or not this was the case remains open to question.

5.2.1 Benevolent Societies - Chapters of St. John's Societies

Chapters of three prominent St. John's societies[492] - the Benevolent Irish Society, the Loyal Orange Association, and the Dorcas Society - were established in Harbour Grace during the nineteenth century. The Conception Bay chapter of the Benevolent Irish Society was established in Harbour Grace in 1814. At that time, members of this society determined that there was need for an organized system of charity in the community to cope with the increasing numbers of destitute.[493] The Conception Bay chapter adopted the same rules as the St. John's chapter and attended to, among others, those who were orphans, those children of parents whose misfortune prevented them from supporting them, and those who from accident or misfortune were unable to support themselves or their families.[494] While not specifically referring to those affected by shipwreck, women who lost their husbands to shipwreck or children who lost their fathers would seem to fit these qualifications.

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[492] Previously discussed in chapter one.

[493] BIS, Centenary Volume and Arthur Fox, "The Benevolent Irish Society: A Capsule History," The Monitor, (March 17, 1975).

[494] BIS, Centenary Volume, p.18.

With the provision of sickness and death benefits, aid to needy brethren, mortality fees to widows, and other welfare services, the Loyal Orange Association was a welcome addition to many nineteenth century Newfoundland communities.[495] The Harbour Grace lodge was established around 1870. Being a member of the Loyal Orange Association meant a man would receive financial help if he was sick and unable to work, and upon his death, his funeral expenses would be paid and his widow would receive mortality fees.[496] As with the Benevolent Irish Society, there is no direct evidence that the Loyal Orange Association contributed to the families of shipwrecked seafarers in Harbour Grace. However, if a seafarer or fishermen was a member of the Association, his widow would have been entitled to benefits.

A Harbour Grace chapter of a Presbyterian women's group was established in the 1870's.[497] Although I cannot be sure, it was likely the Dorcas Society since there was a chapter of it in the community. This Harbour Grace society provided clothing and fuel tickets to the honest and industrious poor.[498] Beyond this, not much is known which can allow us to assess its importance in Harbour Grace yet it did receive funding from the

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[495] Senior, "Orange Order," abstract.

[496] Senior, "Orange Order," p.126.

[497] W.M. Moncrieff, A History of the Presbyterian Church in Newfoundland, 1842-1967 (Grand Falls, NF: Author, 1968), p.70.

[498] See PANL, Dorcas Society Manuscript Collection, St. David's, The Dissenting Church of Christ, p.64, and Edna Potts, "The Dorcas Society," in The Book of Newfoundland, Volume Two, ed. Joseph R. Smallwood (St. John's, NF: Newfoundland Book Publishers Ltd., 1937), p.90.

Newfoundland government to support its charitable endeavors. According to the "Statement of Expenditure for the year ending June 30th, 1899", the Dorcas Society of Harbour Grace received $120.09 from the Newfoundland Government to support its initiatives.[499]

5.2.2 Harbour Grace Benevolent Societies

The Church of England Home and Foreign Mission Fund and the Conception Bay British Society were two organizations, although not formed specifically for Harbour Grace residents, which were prominent in this community rather than St. John's. The aim of these societies was to support residents, with donations of money, food, or clothing during times of crisis. Whether this support was offered only one time or several times was not clear, but it can be assumed that some families probably required yearly assistance. The Conception Bay British Society played an important role in the community. Known as an "old and benevolent institution,"[500] this society was experienced in providing help to its members (or member's families) when they were ill or suffered bereavement. The society's benefits served as a form of life insurance and included mortality payments of forty dollars to the family of a member at his death and twenty dollars on the death of a member's wife or widow. Widows had to pay ten cents a year into the funds of the Society in order for the family to secure the benefit. According

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[499] "Statement of Expenditure for the year ending June 30th, 1899", in Newfoundland, Journal, 1900, p.314 - Appendix.

[500] The Harbor Grace Standard, 1 April, 1899, p.1.

to The Harbor Grace Standard, there were numerous occasions when membership in this society proved to be a blessing to men laid up with sickness and it was a great help to families who had lost their main bread-winner.[501]

5.3 Loss of Husbands

Research on aspects of widowhood in both contemporary and historical literature provides several suggestions regarding the prospects of widows in Harbour Grace. According to census returns, there were 263 and 257 widows living in Harbour Grace in 1891 and 1901 respectively.[502] However, it is unfortunate that the census data does not indicate the ages of these women or the circumstances under which they were widowed. Some women might have lost their husbands at sea or in industrial accidents, while others might have lost their husbands to sickness or age. Regardless of why they were widowed, the plight of widows in late nineteenth century Newfoundland was pitiful. Some widows, without their husband's income, were left destitute and their attempts to relieve their situations were often constrained by other's ideas of what they could respectably do.

Re-marriage was one way in which some widows could change their destitute circumstances. It was considered natural for the younger widow who was still of child-

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[501] The Harbor Grace Standard, 1 April, 1899, p.1.

[502] See the Newfoundland, Census 1891 (Volume One), pp.44-46 and Newfoundland, Census, 1901 (Volume One), pp.38-40.

bearing age to remarry.[503] According to the Harbour Grace Anglican parish records of St. Paul's Church, Christ Church, and St. Peter's Church, as well as the Harbour Grace Roman Catholic records of Immaculate Conception Church, twelve widows remarried between 1890 and 1900.[504] Most of them were of a child-bearing age (all except one were between the ages of 20 and 36). Two examples include Louisa Pike, a 33 year old widow (previously married to Mark Pike, a seaman) who on May 22, 1892, married fisherman Samuel Percy Spracklin, and Flora French, a 29 year old widow (previously married to Stephen French, a fisherman) who on August 12, 1897 married seaman Ambrose Crutch.[505] This evidence indicates that in late nineteenth century Harbour Grace remarriage of widows was accepted and performed by the church. Both Louisa Pike and Flora French had previously been married to a seaman and fisherman respectively. It is unknown why they were widowed, whether it was due to shipwreck or natural causes, yet they chose to marry men who worked in the same occupations. Did they accept the risks of marrying a seaman or fisherman or was it simply a matter of

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[503] Jane Robinson A Widow's Handbook (Revised Edition) (St. John's: Jesperson Press, 1985), p.14.

[504] See the Parish Records, Marriages (1890-1900) for St. Paul's Anglican Church, Christ Church, St. Peter's Anglican Church, and Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, NF (the records are listed by community and denomination). Many of these records are also available on the Internet as part of the Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogy Project (Conception Bay North) at http://www.huronweb.com/genweb/nfdata/main_065.htm.

[505] See the Parish Records, Marriages for St. Paul's Anglican Church and Christ Church.

community make-up?

According to the larger historical literature on widowhood, some societies, such as colonial Massachusetts, often had a shortage of unmarried women so widows would frequently be able to remarry.[506] Was this the case in Harbour Grace? According to census returns, while the ratio of females to males aged 15 to 40 remained close to equal, females between the ages of 20 and 25 in Harbour Grace actually outnumbered males of the same age by 312 to 229 respectively in 1891.[507] For men who wanted to marry, this meant they could often chose whether or not they wanted to marry a widow. Some men might have been reluctant to do so as it often meant taking on extra responsibilities, such as dependent children.

Re-marriage was deemed to be acceptable, but since only twelve out of over two hundred widows in Harbour Grace were re-married during the late nineteenth century, was this the preferred choice of most women? The poorest widow had few choices; she could remarry or depend on poorly paid work or her male children for support.[508] Some widows chose not to remarry, however, regardless of the financial and social security a new marriage would bring. Although society deemed a woman's role to be that of

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[506] Ida Blom, "The History of Widowhood: A Bibliographic Overview," Journal of Family History, Vol.16, No.2 (1991), p.193.

[507] Newfoundland, Census, 1891 (Volume One), pp.44-5 and Newfoundland, Census, 1901 (Volume One), pp. 38-9.

[508] Robinson A Widow's Handbook, p.14.

tending to home and family,[509] there were some employment opportunities available for women. From the late nineteenth century onwards employment as domestic servants, sales clerks, typists, and factory workers was available in towns such as Harbour Grace and the city of St. John's.[510] Some widows became midwives. Although deemed acceptable work for widowed women, compensation for midwifery during the late nineteenth century was often rendered in-kind, possibly in the form of fish, hay, bread, or quilts.[511] Such employment did not provide adequate subsistence to women and their families, but it was probably enough for those who wanted to remain independent. Cadigan, in his discussion of early to mid-nineteenth century Conception Bay, discusses how some fishermen used violence to assert their authority within the household.[512] During the 1890's, physical assault of women (usually at the hands of their husbands) was still being ignored by the public.[513] At that time, women who lived under such circumstances had little recourse but to stay with their husbands. However, if a woman lost her husband at sea, for example, it is possible that she would not want to re-marry. Under such circumstances, even though the household had lost its main breadwinner, many widows might have taken the opportunity to gain some form of independence for

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[509] Cullum, Baird, and Penney, "A Woman's Lot," p.134.

[510] Cullum, Baird, and Penney, "A Woman's Lot," p.97.

[511] Cullum, Baird, and Penney, "A Woman's Lot," p.132.

[512] Cadigan, Hope and Deception, p.74.

[513] Cullum, Baird, and Penney, "A Woman's Lot," pp.137-38.

themselves and their children.

5.4 Cultural Impact

5.4.1 Stories

Many Harbour Grace residents were involved in some aspects of the fishing and shipping industries and shipwreck was one of the risks of working at sea. The occurrence of shipwreck affected both residents and their families. It was bound to reverberate in their culture as well. The shipwreck stories written in Harbour Grace were sometimes of a dark or supernatural nature. While collecting material for an undergraduate course in the Folklore Department at Memorial University, John Fitzgerald was told the following story. Disturbing in its black humour, this story addressed the loss of one man's wife. It also reflected Harbour Grace's culture and history as a fishing community.

> There was once a man and a woman in the area of Harbour Grace who were married but did not get along very well. One day while returning from a trip on which she had visited her relatives, this woman was believed to have drowned when the boat on which she was a passenger sank. The husband was making funeral preparations when he received a telegram from a town about twenty miles away. The telegram read, "Recovered your wife's body. Four lobsters attached to each arm and leg. Please advise". The man, who had never been able to agree with his wife, sent back the following telegram to that town. "Sell lobsters, send money here, set wife again.[514]

Many of Harbour Grace's stories of shipwreck involved eerie sounds. Interviewed

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[514] John Joseph Fitzgerald, "Information Collected in the Harbour Grace Area Concerning Customs and Traditions Associated with Funerals and the Ensuing Ceremonies," MUNFLA ms 74-152, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3400, Memorial University, 1974, p.9.

in Riverhead in March 1981,[515] Andy Short recalled how he heard of stories called "Hollies." A "Holly," according to the Dictionary of Newfoundland English, refers to the "cries of dead fishermen heard on stormy nights .... the echoes of the hollering or crying of the drowning crew."[516] Although he admitted there were not many vessels shipwrecked in Conception Bay, he recalled people talking about such sounds coming from the waters. According to Short, these sounds might include the rattling of oars or people calling out 'Yo, Ho!'.[517] Another sound heard by some residents of Harbour Grace was whistling.

> In the early years of this century, a shipwreck took place on the stony bar that runs the breath of Harbour Grace harbour. Tradition has it that a young sailor aboard the ship had the habit of whistling loudly to keep himself awake during the late night watches. On the night of the shipwreck, a wild northeast wind whipped up suddenly, turning the entrance to the harbour into a foaming mantrap. The young sailor and all hands were swept into the sea and drowned. The sailor's body was washed ashore under a grove of trees that ran back towards the local road. According to legend, when high winds and rain are about to occur, an eerie and haunting whistle can be heard above the grove's rustling leaves.[518]

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[515] Philip Christopher Snow, "Andy Short: The life of Andy Short as both a Fisherman and a Sealer," MUNFLA ms 81-359, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 1020, Memorial University, 1981, p.3. Andy Short was born in 1900.

[516] Holly [The Dictionary of Newfoundland English on-line]; available from http://www.heritage.nf.ca/dictionary/azindex/pages/2274.html; Internet: accessed 18 November 2001.

[517] Snow, "Andy Short," p.43.

[518] Philip Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting in the Harbour Grace Area," MUNFLA ms 76-100, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 2000, Memorial University, 1976, pp.19-20.

In addition to eerie sounds, there were also stories of phantom lights. One story told of a ship which was driven into the rocks off the town of Bryant's Cove, with all hands drowned. According to legend, as a severe storm was about to occur, "the spirits of these shipwrecked sailors rise from the ruins of their craft to give the living warning, in the form of a light, of impending bad weather."[519] Other stories told of disappearing vessels and the subsequent appearance of lights where the vessels went down.[520]

By telling stories of eerie sounds or phantom lights, and passing them down from generation to generation, residents of Harbour Grace were able to address some of their fears. In chapter three I referred to stories from other Newfoundland communities about phantom lights.[521] These stories served to warn fishermen or seafarers of bad weather or hazardous areas. I also speculated that these stories were a means through which residents came to terms with what happened to family members or friends. They were a reminder of what could happen at sea. Fishermen, seafarers, and their families faced the hostile environment of the North Atlantic daily. Fishermen and seafarers confronted the possibility of death; their families faced the possibility of life without them.

5.4.2 Weather Signs/Folklore

Fishermen and seafarers had no control over the elements they faced at sea, but they could prepare for inclement weather and avoid putting themselves in dangerous

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[519] Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting," p.20.

[520] Snow, "Andy Short," p.44.

[521] See chapter three, section 3.2 "Cultural Impact."

situations. Many of Newfoundland's mariners were excellent readers of the weather.[522] The need to predict weather patterns led to a variety of methods for avoiding on-coming disasters.[523] I referred to the weather forecasting abilities of Trepassey fishermen in chapter four; their studying of the clouds, sky, and wind, as well as their familiarity with landmarks. The fishermen of Harbour Grace were also proficient in such skills. According to interviews conducted by Philip Sheppard in Harbour Grace, many of the signs which this community's fishermen watched for and lived by involved southerly winds, "traditionally a watershed of bad weather."[524] A southeast wind was always a traditional 'bad weather wind', forecasting rain in the summer and wet snow or freezing drizzle in winter.[525] One sign, known as "atmospheric illusion," was said to occur when the southern sky appeared to be down on the very tops of the trees, boding bad weather with lots of thunder and heavy rain. In order for this illusion to occur, the air had to be sticky, humid and extremely still. The collector's informants were convinced that the illusion, though rare, was an accurate indicator of thunder and lightening.[526] Many

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[522] Cynthia Lamson, "Weather By the Signs: An Interview with Captain Jack Dodd, Harbour Grace," MUNFLA ms 77-108, unpublished research paper submitted for Folklore 3400, Memorial University, 1977, p.11.

[523] Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting," p.1. Most informants were born in the 1890's and were elderly at time of interview.

[524] Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting," p.5.

[525] Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting," p.12.

[526] Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting," p.5.

fishermen also judged the "height" of dawn.[527] If dawn broke low with the horizon they believed it would be a fine, sunny day with low winds. By contrast, a high-breaking dawn meant high winds and a chance of rain. These signs were considered extremely useful by those fishermen who traveled long distances from the safety of land in small boats.

5.4.3 Shipwreck Ballads/Poetry

We were bound home in October from the shore of Labrador
Tryin' to head a bad nor'easter and snow too
But the winds swept down upon us makin' day as dark as night
Just before we made the land of Baccalieu.

O we tried to clear the island as we brought her further south
As the wind from out the northeast stronger blew
Till our lookout soon he shouted and there lay dead ahead
Through the snow squalls loomed the cliffs of Baccalieu.

And 'twas hard down with the tiller as we struggled with the sheets
Tryin' our best to haul them in a foot or two
Till our decks so sharply tilted we could hardly keep our feet
As we hauled her from the rocks of Baccalieu

O the combers beat her under and I thought she'd never rise
And our mainboom it was bending nigh in two
With her lee rail three feet under and two hands at the wheel
Sure we hauled her from the rocks of Baccalieu.

To leeward was the island and to windward was the gale
And the blinding sleet would cut you through and through
But our hearts were beating gladly for no longer could we gaze
Down to leeward at the cliffs of Baccalieu.

This song[528] describes one of the hazardous areas Harbour Grace fishermen and

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[527] Sheppard, "Study of Folklore Weather Forecasting," p.10.

[528] Feltham, Northeast From Baccalieu, p.77-8.

their families encountered as they travelled to and from Labrador, Baccalieu Island. The rocks and cliffs of this island contributed to many shipwrecks throughout the nineteenth century.[529] Although the person who wrote this song survived his shipwreck experience, according to Feltham, little is known about him or his experience other than what he recorded. This song did, however, reveal some information about the Labrador fishery and the hazards many fishermen and seafarers faced. The composer's words, "we were bound home in October from the shore of Labrador" describe how the schooner was travelling home from Labrador in October. Many Harbour Grace residents returned home from Labrador during the autumn months as well and my research revealed that many of the wrecks which affected the community occurred at that time of year.[530]

The 1898 *Greenland* disaster was commemorated in poetry and song.[531] One such poem was published in The Harbor Grace Standard, in memory of Walter Murphy, who died in the disaster.[532] It was sent to the newspaper by "N.P. of Mosquito". Who this person was is not known - a wife, sibling, parent, or friend? What is known is that this person felt the best way to remember Walter Murphy was to write a poem about him.

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[529] See "Map 2 - The Straight Shore," in Appendix 1. Drawn by Harold Fleet, Paradise, NF, 2002.

[530] See Wells, "Database of Shipwrecks," in Appendix 2. The results of this database are discussed in chapter two.

[531] See Ryan and Small, Haulin' Rope and Gaff, pp. 46-48, Peacock, Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, pp.926-927, and Greenleaf, Ballads, 299-300.

[532] "In Memory of Walter Murphy," The Harbor Grace Standard, 15 April 1898, p.1.

Away, far away to the home of the seal
On the Northern frozen pan,
Where the iceberg rears its lofty head,
And the storm-king scowls in mighty dread,
Appalling feeble man.

The ocean leaps from its slumbering bed,
And crashes with mighty surge,
The awful tempest sweeps along
With unhallowed sound from its threatening gong,
And proclaims a funeral dirge.

The strong man falters in his step,
While the blending storms pass by;
As one by one his comrades fall,
And shroud themselves in their icy pall,
There to succumb and die.

Like a lamb that wandered from the fold,
Away in the dreary wilds;
Feeble and faint he totters on:
Until grim death claims him for his own,
And he pillows his head and dies.

No loving wife, with a fond caress,
Nor a tender mother's care;
Was near to soothe his aching heart,
As helpless he tossed on the billow's crest,
Nor wipe the frozen tear.

He lies in a heap of breathless clay,
And the storm sweeps on at will,
Until we hear, the Master's voice;
At that sound, both death and earth rejoice,
For He bids the storm be still.

And, now, beneath the church-yard sward,
His long last tribute paid,
We leave him in his earthly mound,
Until the Angel's trump shall sound,
On that great Judgement Day.

Shipwreck ballads served as records of past events and highlighted the sadness of family and community when a ship was lost.[533] Unfortunately, I have not yet found any songs specifically written about Harbour Grace shipwrecks. However, there were some that were not written for specific wrecks, but rather circumstances, which could apply to many communities. In chapter three I referred to the ballad "The Ship That Never Returned," but there is another ballad which refers to lost ships entitled "The Ship That Never Came."[534]

> Oh mother, oh mother come tell to me, oh mother come tell me why,
> Why don't my father's ship come home, why do you sob and cry?
> All the other ships are coming home leaving the white waves foam,
> But my father's ship is not come yet, what makes her tarry long?
>
> Your father's ship, my darling child, his face you never shall see,
> For the hurricane of the ocean sweeps his body in the sea;
> The fish that's in the water swims over young father's breast,
> And his body lies in motion, and I hope his soul's at rest.

Sometimes ships simply disappeared and families never knew what happened to those on board. This ballad could apply to many shipwrecks, including those involving the *Rosevear* and *Amelia Corkum*, Harbour Grace ships which disappeared in 1893 and 1900 respectively. The *Rosevear*,[535] a brigantine of 153 tons belonging to John Munn & Company, was one of many Harbour Grace vessels which sailed the North Atlantic with cargoes of general merchandise and fish. In 1892, the ship sailed to Trapani, Italy,

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[533] Baehre, Outrageous Seas, p.309-10.

[534] Peacock, Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, pp. 795-6.

[535] See "The Missing Vessel *Rosevear*," The Harbor Grace Standard, 16 May 1893, p.4.

possibly with a cargo of dried codfish.[536] On December 29th, 1892, the ship left Italy to return to Harbour Grace. What happened to the ship and its crew after it put to sea is unknown. The *Amelia Corkum* was lost too under similar circumstances after discharging cargo at Oporto, Portugal.[537] According to the newspapers, grave fears were entertained for the safety of Captain Merdon and crew.[538] Several of the crew, including the Captain, steward William Merchant, able-seaman John Murray, and William Butt were married and from Harbour Grace.

5.5 Economic Impact

During the late nineteenth century many of Harbour Grace's merchants lost ships and cargoes through shipwreck. In 1892, one such incident involved the wreck of the *Maggie W. Smith,* a British vessel which was carrying a cargo of general merchandise to John Munn & Company. When the vessel ran ashore in a dense fog at Bradley's Cove, North Shore, Conception Bay, its cargo was plundered by illegal salvors.[539] Munn & Company sustained an economic loss as it did not receive all of its cargo. Another loss

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[536] Italy was one of Newfoundland's major markets for dried codfish throughout the late nineteenth century. For more information see Ryan, "The Newfoundland Salt Cod Trade," p.54.

[537] Trade Review, 1 December 1900 and The Harbor Grace Standard, 19 October 1900, p.4.

[538] Trade Review, 1 December 1900 and The Harbor Grace Standard, 19 October 1900, p.4.

[539] "The *Maggie W. Smith* Wrecked at Bradley's Cove on Saturday Evening (April 30)", The Evening Telegram, 2 May 1892, p.4. See "Illegal Salvage" for more information.

occurred in 1900 with the shipwreck of the *Sarah Jane* and the loss of its cargo of fish. The ship and cargo were insured, yet the company still sustained a considerable loss as the ship which went down had just been extensively repaired.[540]

Individual planters (fishermen who hired their own crews, but depended on the merchants for financing),[541] fishermen, and seafarers, were also adversely affected by shipwreck. Such events meant the loss of their belongings and a season's work. When Munn & Company's schooner *Mary M.* was lost on her passage to Labrador in 1897, everyone from the owners, who financed the voyage for the planters, to the crew and passengers experienced a loss.[542] There was fishing gear and supplies on board as the ship was transferring planters and passengers to Labrador for the fishing season. Unfortunately, neither the crew nor passengers were able to save anything beyond clothing and several planters lost heavily.[543] According to W.A. Munn, Harbour Grace fishermen and their families took many of their belongings on a voyage to Labrador.[544] It was not uncommon to find vessels with 150 to 200 men and women on board carrying much of what they owned, including their household furniture.[545] This meant that when a

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[540] "Loss of the *Sarah Jane*", The Harbor Grace Standard, 16 March 1900, p.4.

[541] "The Fishery", Decks Awash, Vol.11, No.2 (November-December 1982), p.6.

[542] "Loss of the *Mary M.*", The Harbor Grace Standard, 16 July 1897, p.4.

[543] "Loss of the *Mary M.*", The Harbor Grace Standard.

[544] W.A. Munn, "Harbour Grace History," The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol.38, No.1 (July 1938), p.7.

[545] Munn, "Harbour Grace History", The Newfoundland Quarterly, July 1938, p.7.

ship was wrecked many families lost everything they owned, including fishing gear, furniture, and clothing. How did fishermen and their families who sustained such losses recover from it? While some appeals were made on behalf of shipwreck widows and orphans, there is no evidence which suggests that any appeals were made on behalf of those who survived a shipwreck. While loss of life certainly outweighed economic loss, the circumstances of shipwreck left many survivors destitute.

5.6 Provisions of Relief

Many shipwrecks occurred as fishermen prosecuted the sometimes profitable, but always dangerous, Bank and Labrador fisheries. During the nineteenth century the Newfoundland government established some relief funds which provided for fishermen and their families after a shipwreck occurred. The Bank Fishermen's Insurance Fund, which provided a grant of $80.00 to a man's widow or dependents if he died on a voyage to the Grand Banks, was established on March 1, 1889.[546] As a financial contribution to this fund, a ship's master paid 50 cents for each member of his crew (which was eventually taken from their wages) while a ship's owner paid 20 cents for each member of the crew. Harbour Grace Bank fishermen contributed $102.90 to this fund in 1890,

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[546] See Newfoundland, Consolidated Statutes, Second Series, pp.256-7 and Newfoundland, Consolidated Statutes, Third Series, pp.1535.-37. Also see Andersen, "Nineteenth Century American Banks Fishing Under Sail," p.115 and Devine and O'Mara. Notable Events in the History of Newfoundland (St. John's, NF: Printed by Devine and O'Mara, Trade Review Office, 1900), p.47.

$45.50 in 1891, and $14.00 in 1893.[547] As the number of Harbour Grace ships and men involved in the Bank fishery declined throughout the 1890's, so too did their contributions to the fund. While The Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland listed those who received payments from the Bank Insurance Fund, it was difficult to determine if anyone from Harbour Grace received such benefits. Often the only information listed was the name of the person receiving the funds, as well as the person on whose behalf they received it (ie. the lost fishermen). Their community was not listed and in cases where the vessel's names were included, none of those listed included any of the Harbour Grace shipwrecks studied so far. During the late nineteenth century, shipowners and crews from the south coast and communities such as Grand Bank and Fortune began to dominate the Bank fishery. Although some Harbour Grace shipowners and residents continued to fish on the Grand Banks - eight vessels and 147 crewmen in 1890 and one vessel and 20 crewmen in 1893[548] - it was apparent that the industry was no longer a profitable feature of Harbour Grace's economy.

In 1892, the Newfoundland government enacted legislation which addressed the needs of Labrador fishermen and their families. According to statute, when a vessel was lost at the Labrador fishery, the owner or hirer of the vessel was obliged to help

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[547] "A Return Showing the Number of Vessels Fitted Out in Newfoundland in the year 1893 for the Bank Fishery," Newfoundland, Journal, 1894, p.112 - Appendix.

[548] "A Return Showing the Number of Vessels," Newfoundland, Journal, 1894, p.112 - Appendix.

fishermen return home.[549] This statute was important not only because it provided for fishermen who lost everything after a shipwreck, but it provided for their families as well. The Labrador fishery was a family fishery during the late nineteenth century as some fishermen and their families went there for the summer and returned home during the autumn months. The statute's definition of "fishermen" as "all or any of the persons, male or female, engaged in any manner whatsoever in the catching, curing, drying, or shipping of fish on the coasts of Labrador or on any of the islands adjacent thereto,"[550] meant that it applied to women who participated in the fishery (as well as men). The owner of the vessel was required to provide for their passage home.

Although this statute benefitted fishermen and their families, it was somewhat suggestive of the laissez-faire attitude of the early nineteenth century (the position that government should not become involved in commerce). I previously discussed how social expectations had changed by the 1890's. The public expected the government to listen to and address their concerns about safety at sea. The Newfoundland government enacted the above legislation, provided some provisions for shipwrecked seafarers, and arranged for the establishment of a Lloyd's surveyor on the island. However, in this situation, Newfoundland's politicians passed all the responsibility for shipwrecked seafarers onto the shipowner. Shipowners should take responsibility for the

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[549] See Chapter 126 (Of the Labrador Fishery), Consolidated Statutes (Second Series), pp.922-23 and Chapter 157 (Of the Labrador Fishery), Consolidated Statutes (Third Series), pp.1532-33. There were no changes in the statute.

[550] Chapter 126, Consolidated Statutes (Second Series), p.923.

seaworthiness of their ships and in turn, the safety of those who travel on them, but so too should the government.

5.7 Illegal Activities

During the late nineteenth century Harbour Grace served as the economic centre for the Conception Bay region. Among the several government officials present in the community were those involved in law enforcement. They included stipendiary magistrate Thomas Bennett and Head Constable Alex Jackson, as well as several constabulary officers.[551] Harbour Grace also had its own courthouse. The first was built in 1808 from funds raised by local merchants, while the present courthouse was built in 1830.[552] This was where those who took part in illegal activities were punished. While the legal salvage of cargo was not common in Harbour Grace, incidents of illegal salvage and barratry were evident in the community.

5.7.1 Illegal Salvage

My research into incidents which in some way affected residents of Harbour Grace revealed disputes over the ownership of shipwrecked vessels, as well as incidents of illegal salvage. According to The Harbor Grace Standard, on March 13, 1891, the *White Squall*, a schooner owned by A. Goodridge & Sons of St. John's, was caught on a sheet of ice and driven out of the harbour at Harbour Grace.[553] Although the crew was on

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[551] Please refer to the discussion in section 5.1 "The Community."

[552] Snow, "Andy Short", p.17.

[553] "Derelict," The Harbor Grace Standard, 13 March 1891.

the ship at the time, they were unable to secure it and the vessel was wrecked. After the crew abandoned the vessel, some people from Harbour Grace South decided to board the ship and take possession of her. A much larger group then arrived from Western Bay with the same idea, removed the people from Harbour Grace South (the newspaper does not state how this was done), and took possession of the ship for themselves. The newspaper stated that the people from Harbour Grace South, who were the first to board the ship and believed the wreck belonged to them, intended to bring their claim to court. While the resolution of this incident is unknown, it shows how residents valued the property sometimes given up by the sea. In the nineteenth century disputes over abandoned vessels were common. Historian Shannon Ryan discusses the legal cases involving abandoned versus deserted ships, some of which ensued in 1852 after some sealing crews left their ships during severe weather.[554] According to Ryan, the courts usually decided in favour of the crews which salvaged abandoned ships since the salvors sometimes risked their lives to save it and the cargo on board.[555] The dispute over ownership of the *White Squall* was not an issue of abandonment versus desertion, but one of ownership in general. However, it indicates the fervour with which many Newfoundlanders fought for their salvage and property rights.

One prominent case of illegal salvage involved the English barquentine *Maggie*

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[554] Ryan, The Ice Hunters, pp.296-97.

[555] Ryan, The Ice Hunters, pp.297.

W. Smith in 1892.[556] Captain Thomson and his crew left Bristol for Harbour Grace with a cargo of general merchandise for John Munn & Company. There was stormy weather all across the Atlantic and in a dense fog the ship struck the rocks at Bradley's Cove, about twenty miles from Harbour Grace. The crew left the ship, but the Captain and his son remained on board. Not long after the ship struck the rocks, it was, "boarded by a crowd of men who exercised themselves in a way they should not."[557] The men were stealing cargo from the ship. The captain sent his boy ashore to the telegraph office at Western Bay. There he sent a message to John Munn & Company which informed them of the loss of the vessel. At that time, he also requested some assistance. The telegram reached John Munn & Company, but before they could get a reply to the captain that assistance would be sent, they found that the telegraph wires had been cut. According to W.A. Munn, "all recognized at once that there was trouble intended from wreckers [sic]."[558] When the customs officer arrived, he and the Captain did everything they could to prevent the illegal salvage of the ship's cargo. However, the men congregated at the scene of the wreck stripped the ship of her sails and running-gear and tore up the cabin as well. When Head Constable Jackson arrived from Harbour Grace, the illegal salvage of

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[556] See "Wreck of the *Maggie W. Smith*," The Harbor Grace Standard, 3 May 1892, "The *Maggie W. Smith* Wrecked at Bradley's Cove on Saturday Evening (April 30)," The Evening Telegram, 2 May 1892, p.4., Royal Gazette, 3 May 1892, and W.A. Munn, "Harbour Grace History," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol.38, No.3 (December 1938), p.9.

[557] "The *Maggie W. Smith* Wrecked," The Evening Telegram.

[558] Munn, "Harbour Grace History," December 1938, p.9.

the *Maggie W. Smith* and its cargo ceased.

In July 1892, there was an incident of illegal salvage at Five Islands, Labrador. Some of the people involved in the case were from Harbour Grace and the legal ramifications were played out in the community. In November 1892, Nicholas Peddle of Mosquito, Master of the schooner *Kate*, complained that "on the 19th day of July last past at Southern Tickle, Five Islands, Labrador, Thomas Parsons, Edward Parsons, Michael Parsons, John Vaters, and Henry Vaters, all of Salmon Cove, did maliciously cut and destroy the wrecked schooner *Kate* of which the said complainant was Master and without his leave and license to do so."[559] (The documents do not state how the vessel became shipwrecked) His statement was confirmed by Albert Martin of Harbour Grace, who was a sharemen on the *Kate* with Nicholas Peddle. Martin, who was subpoenaed by the court,[560] stated that he was onshore at the time of the wreck, about 200 yards away, and saw the ship go ashore. While he went to the ship with a man named John James in a skiff and brought several people to shore including Nicholas Peddle, two people were drowned. About a day later, when he went back on board the ship he discovered there were several men on board, including Thomas Parsons and Henry Vater. They were cutting and slashing whatever they could get off. According to Martin, these men came

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[559] PANL, Harbour Grace Court Records, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Warrant for the arrest of Thomas Parsons, Michael Parsons, Edward Parsons, John Vaters and Henry Vaters, 14 November 1892.

[560] PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Subpoena for Albert Martin and William Kavanagh of Harbour Grace, 14 November 1892.

from another ship of which Parsons was the master.

The illegal salvage of both the *Maggie W. Smith* and the *Kate* were investigated by Judge Bennett of Harbour Grace. His investigation led to several arrests. For their part in the illegal salvage of the *Maggie W. Smith*, Elias Whelan and Thomas Pennell were charged with "wrecking [sic] and stealing" and "attempting to wreck" respectively.[561] The complaint against Elias Whelan was made by Captain Thomson. He paid Whelan eight dollars to look after his personal clothing when a large number of persons came on board the ship and began to illegally salvage and steal her tackling, stores, and cargo. However, while Whelan was in possession of the captain's property, "he did feloniously steal a number of articles belonging to me [the captain] amongst which was one gold chain of the value of twenty dollars."[562] Thomas, Edward, and Michael Parsons were charged for their role in the incident which took place on board the *Kate*. Judge Bennett was strongly against the practice of illegal salvage[563] and his opposition was evident in the punishments he handed down against all defendants. He sentenced them to varying terms of imprisonment and hard labour at the penitentiary in St. John's. Their sentences ranged from 60 days for Elias Whelan, three months each for Thomas, Edward, and

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[561] PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Warrant for Elias Whelan, 13 May 1892 and Warrant for Thomas Pennell, 9 May 1892.

[562] PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Warrant for Elias Whelan, 13 May 1892.

[563] "Wrecking: An Appropriate Punishment," The Harbor Grace Standard, 24 May 1892.

Michael Parsons, and four months for Thomas Pennell.[564]

5.7.2 Barratry

I previously referred to the act of barratry, the intentional misconduct of a ship's master or crew, in chapter four. In the Fall of 1891, several individuals were involved in such an incident. According to warrants issued on January 30 and February 5, 1892,[565] Edmund Hiscock, William Hiscock Jr., and William Hiscock Senior, between the month of October 1890 and the month of January 1891 at both Brigus and Harbor Grace "did unlawfully and wickedly conspire, combine confederate and agree together to cast away and destroy a schooner called the *Sarah Agnes*." The men were also accused of falsely representing that several large quantities of goods, including eight hundred quintals of dried codfish, nine tons oil, three lbs herrings, three lbs. pork, nine lbs. flour, and two cod traps were on board the schooner at the time she was cast away on the 25th day of November 1890.

While the defendants were from Brigus and Bull Cove, they had involved people from Harbour Grace in their scheme as well. Their plan took them to the town when they

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[564] See PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 51, File #1 - Convictions,1892), Conviction Notice for Thomas Pennell and Conviction Notice for Elias Whelan (Judgements were also written on back of warrants) and "Wrecking: An Appropriate Punishment", The Harbor Grace Standard. Also see PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 51, file #1, Convictions 1892), Conviction Notices for Thomas Parsons, Edward Parsons, and Michael Parsons (Judgements were also listed on back of warrants).

[565] PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Warrant for Edmund Hiscock and William Hiscock, 30 January 1892 and PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Warrant for William Hiscock Sr., 5 February 1892.

needed to obtain insurance for the vessel. According to a warrant issued on January 30, 1892, William Hiscock, William Youden, and George Bryne fraudulently obtained insurance for their vessel. from Andrew Thomas Drysdale of Harbor Grace.[566] Although the warrant did not state the circumstances of their meeting with Drysdale or the details of the insurance policy requested by the defendants, it was clear to the courts that these men knew they were defrauding the insurance organization. Subpoenas were issued for several witnesses from Harbour Grace including Andrew Drysdale, Head Constable Alexander Jackson, and George Paterson. The subpoenas did not state what evidence these witnesses had to offer against the defendants.[567] The prisoners were convicted of barratry in Harbour Grace. Edward Hiscock, for example, was sentenced to pay a fine of $400 and imprisonment for a term of two years.[568]

5.8 Conclusion

While Trepassey residents dealt mainly with the wrecks of foreign vessels during the late nineteenth century, the circumstances of shipwreck sometimes hit much closer to home in Harbour Grace. Many residents of Harbour Grace, members of their families or friends, were affected by wrecks of ships. Shipwreck was economically detrimental to the community; sometimes shipowners lost vessels, fishermen lost gear, and families lost

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[566] PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Warrant for William Hiscock, William Youden, and George Bryne, 30 January 1892.

[567] PANL, GN 5/3/B/19 (Box 36, File #8 - Criminal Process, 1892), Subpoenas.

[568] "The Sentences in the Barratry Cases," The Evening Telegram, 21 May 1892, p.4.

all their belongings. In 1897, when the *Mary M.* was lost on a passage to Labrador, the fishing gear and belongings of many of the passengers went down with the ship. The economic consequences of shipwreck could be devastating. It would be almost impossible for fishermen who depended on credit from a merchant to replace their lost gear. If the merchant gave them what they needed on credit, this probably meant they were even more in debt to him. While such circumstances left many families destitute, there is no evidence which suggests that any appeals were held in the community for these families.

However, unlike those who lived in Trepassey, residents of Harbour Grace did not depend on shipwreck to meet some of their economic needs. This was because shipwreck rarely occurred in or around the community. Most incidents involving Harbour Grace ships or men occurred along other community's shores, at Labrador or on the North Atlantic. Residents were affected by shipwreck, but the salvage of cargo was not common. Could this be why illegal salvors were usually prosecuted in Harbour Grace? While such activities were ignored in Trepassey, those caught taking part in them near Harbour Grace or against Harbour Grace ships were prosecuted and usually convicted. Was there a relationship between the need for cargo and the criminal prosecution of this activity? Comparative studies of other communities would be necessary to make such a determination. However, this was once again indicative of the inconsistent manner in which shipping legislation was sometimes being enforced.

In addition to the economic consequences of shipwreck, my research indicates

how people of different social strata responded to and were affected by loss of life from shipwreck. Harbour Grace's population was socially and economically diverse during the late nineteenth century, yet residents seemed to come together to help those in need. The appeals made after the *Lois Jane* and *Greenland* disasters realized subscriptions from people of all social classes. Loss of life from shipwreck resonates in the community's culture as stories which recount disappearing ships and lost crews dominate the community's folklore. Residents also mourned those who were lost and appealed to others in the community for money, food, or clothing for the widows and orphans left behind. While several memorial services were held in the Anglican church, the evidence gave no indication if denominational differences played any role in the community's response.

Conclusions

In the late nineteenth century shipwreck was a daily part of life in Newfoundland's small coastal communities. When there was loss of life at sea, residents came together to mourn those lost and to collect charity on behalf of the widows and orphans left behind. After the *Maggie* disaster in 1897, $2371.88 was raised in St. John's for the wives, husbands, and children of those who were lost. In 1898, for the widows, orphans, and parents of the men who died on the ice in the *Greenland* disaster, $17,000 was raised. Subscriptions were received from residents of many Newfoundland communities, including Harbour Grace. Residents of that community collected donations for the women and children who lost their husbands and fathers, respectively, in other shipwrecks. Such was the case in 1891 when $328.61 was collected for the families of the men lost on the *Lois Jane*. Residents of Harbour Grace were directly affected by shipwreck, which might explain their propensity for taking part in a variety of charitable initiatives. The people of Trepassey were more used to shipwreck victims being strangers rather than members of their own community. Their charitable instincts were not elicited for their own kind, but for people who came into their lives solely because of disaster. With loss of life common around the community Trepassey residents showed their decency by burying shipwreck victims who were unknown to them.

There are more things yet to be learned about Newfoundland communities from their residents' response to shipwreck. It is important to remember what influences bore upon and were created within Newfoundland communities during the late nineteenth

century. The colony's laws were established by both a colonial and Imperial government. The livelihood of many Newfoundlanders meant living in and coping with an often hostile and dangerous environment. The fishery on which they so long depended was in decline. As we consider late nineteenth century political, social and economic factors, issues of responsibility come to prominence. The community chose to be responsible for providing essential items to survivors, burying the dead, or making public appeals on behalf of those left behind. It also held the state accountable for its actions.

By broadening this study of Newfoundland to take into its scope the place of the island in the North Atlantic world I was able to examine the attitudes residents of both Great Britain and Newfoundland held about shipping, safety at sea, and state responsibility. During the nineteenth century British society came to combine their concerns for the state of trade with greater solicitude for the men who prosecuted a trade as seafarers. By the 1890's, the British government was increasingly involved in shipping through the enactment of legislation. Official interest in the safety of seafarers increased throughout the century and so too did the sympathies of the British public. While residents of Newfoundland demonstrated similar concerns - in the 1890's the people of Trepassey, for example, demanded more preventative measures be put in place to protect the interests of seafarers, fishermen, and shipowners - the evidence shows that their belief in the importance of state involvement developed much earlier in the century. As far back as the 1830's, many Newfoundlanders believed it was the responsibility of the government to take care of society's dependent members, especially the aged and

widows. Aware of this conviction, the Newfoundland government did not always ignore the needs and expectations of its residents. In the late nineteenth century social expectations of state responsibility for the destitute, which included those affected by shipwreck, were widespread. While the government failed to make legislative provision for poor relief, they were aware of how their failure to do so influenced their popularity with the electorate. They provided shipwrecked seafarers with the necessary provisions and subsistence, and paid for their passage home.

Newfoundland's place as a British colony meant that Newfoundland fishermen and seafarers were protected by British legislation and they benefitted from the establishment of lighthouses and other safety measures. In Britain, this legislation was sometimes ambiguous and difficult to enforce. The Newfoundland government encountered similar difficulties when attempting to establish or enforce legislation. They had the right to establish a marine court of inquiry, yet there were times when they arbitrarily chose not to. There were salvage laws on the books, yet they were not always enforced by local authorities. With such a combination of political, social and economic factors at work, this study shows how living under an imperial authority could be difficult. The British government sometimes lacked recognition of the economic and social situations and the everyday problems which faced Newfoundland fishermen, seafarers, and their families. Also problematic was the fact that many officials knew little of the poverty in which many fishermen, seafarers, and their families lived. Fishermen and their families depended on the merchants for food and fishing supplies; a

relationship which was not always beneficial to the fishermen. A virtually cash-less society existed by the 1890's. Fishermen were controlled by the merchants who only gave credit, never cash. Shipwreck was therefore economically important to some communities for it meant there was cargo to be salvaged, both legally and illegally. The salvage of a wrecked ship's cargo brought goods into many communities in the form of food, clothing, and sometimes cash. However, shipwreck could also be economically detrimental. In Harbour Grace, for example, shipowners lost ships, fishermen lost gear, and families lost all their belongings.

The study of shipwreck provides historians with one way to learn about the histories of people whose stories were not usually documented. I began this study by stating that the loss of the *Titanic* raised several questions which would facilitate understanding of how shipwreck affected Newfoundland communities in the late nineteenth century. To find some answers to the questions posed, the community and government response to shipwreck, issues of survival, and issues of morality, among others, were explored through numerous examples of Newfoundland shipwrecks.

My study is intended as a general overview of shipwreck and community in late nineteenth century Newfoundland. There are still, however, questions of significance to be explored. Questions, for example, which will consider how the late nineteenth century decline in the fishery influenced economic and social tensions in communities and in turn, affected a community's response to shipwreck. I discussed the work of several Newfoundland historians, as well as other scholars, who explore the economic and social

organization and the diversity of Newfoundland communities. Cadigan and Ommer, for example, consider Newfoundland communities as places where people had to work together to survive. Sider suggests that there were tensions in communities between family members and between residents. While such work enabled me to gain some sense of how residents in nineteenth century Newfoundland communities lived and worked, as well as a sense of the external factors which influenced their everyday lives, it did not include specific discussion of how these factors might have affected residents' response to shipwreck. If this study does nothing more it begins to open up a new area of investigation, one which is clearly justified by the community's remembering of shipwreck, but which is frustratingly little documented in the sources that most directly reveal evidence to historians.

More also needs to be done to address the relationship between salvage and property rights in Newfoundland. While many historians have focused on issues of property with regards to the fishery and the sea's resources, little has been done historically on the relationship between property and salvage and Newfoundlanders' attitudes to such issues. While no examination of shipwreck and Newfoundland communities could answer all of the historian's questions, it is my hope that this study places the relationship between shipwreck and community in a new light, making historians think about it in different ways. Shipwreck did not occur in isolation. All that stemmed from it - the loss of life, acts of heroism, burial of the dead - led to questions of humanity, property, and morality. Trying to find the answers to these questions and, at

the same time, consider social and economic aspects of communities, is fundamental to any study of Newfoundland's place in the North Atlantic world.

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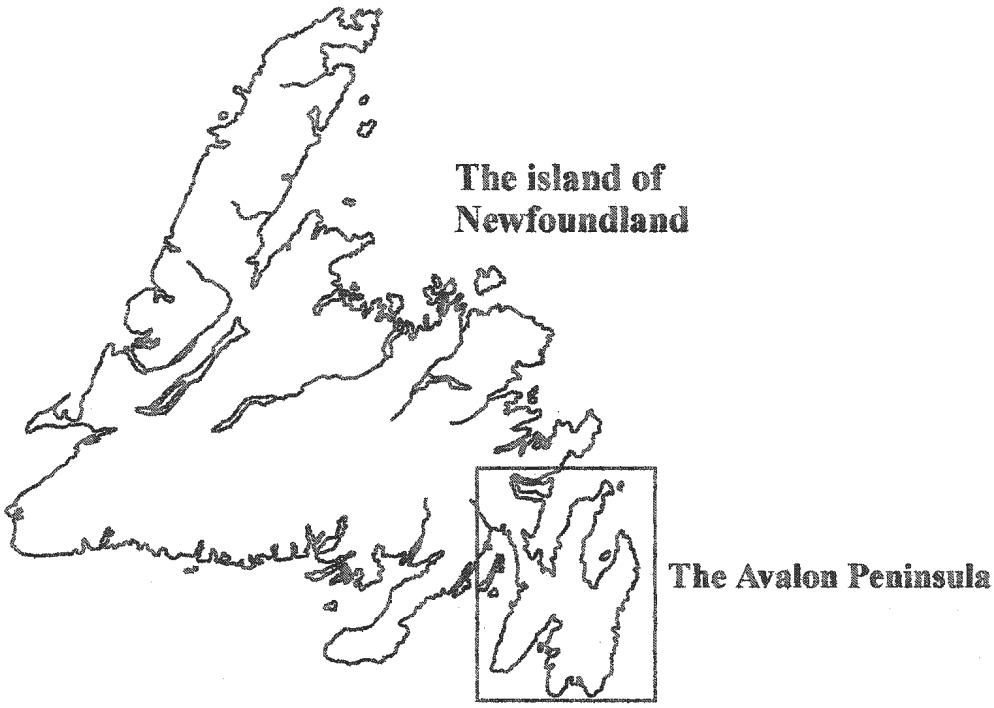
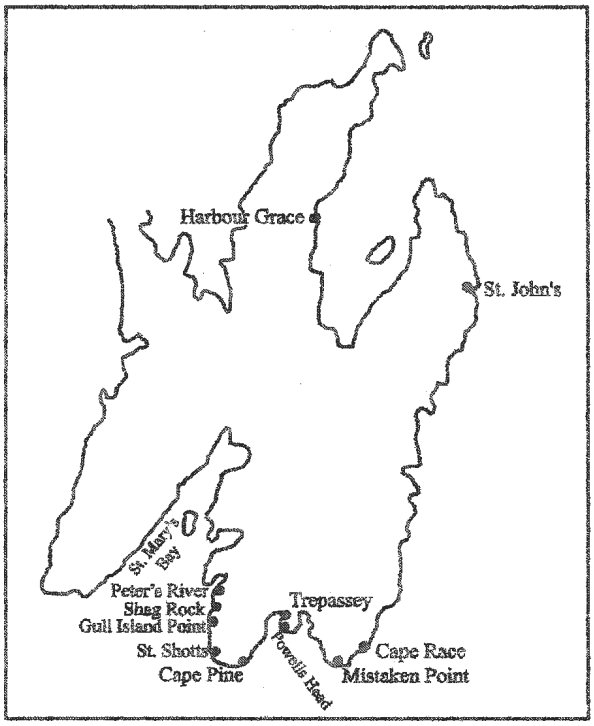
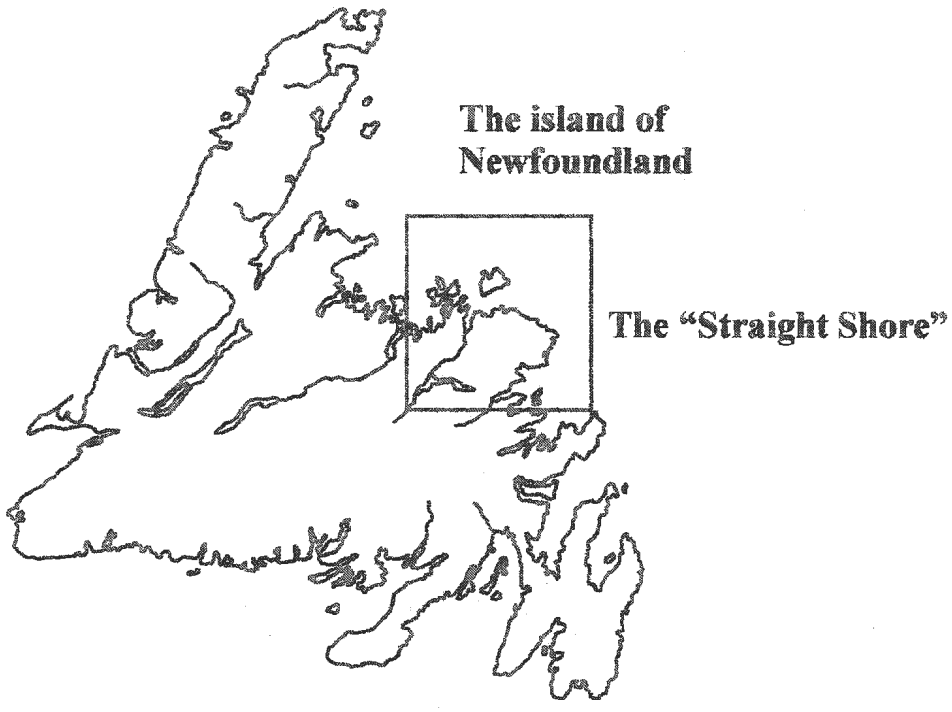
Appendix 1
Map 1 - Trepassey



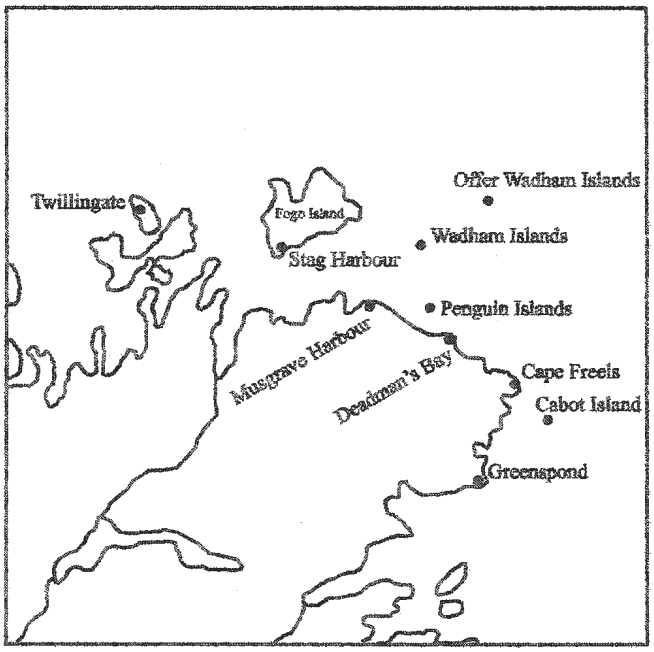
The Avalon Peninsula - Highlighting the Trepassey area and the community's close proximity to other settlements and locations where disasters have occurred. Also note Trepassey's location as compared with Harbour Grace and St. John's (Newfoundland's capital city).



Appendix 1
Map 2 - The "Straight Shore"

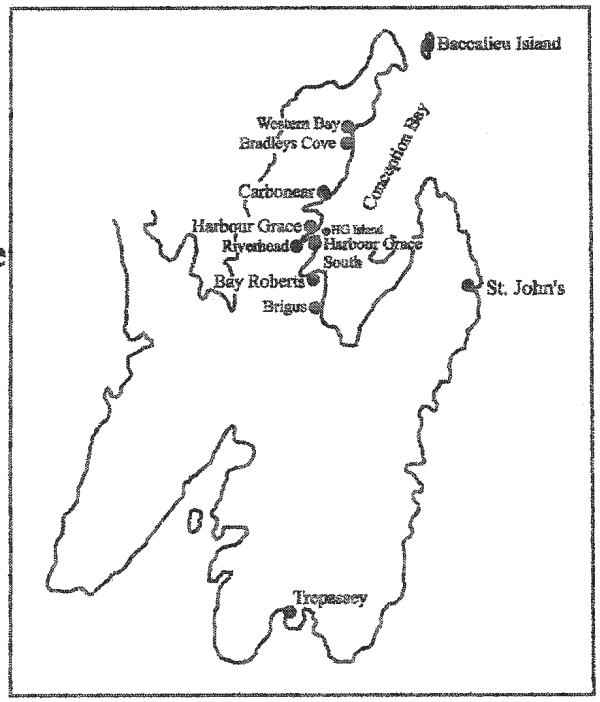


The "Straight Shore" - An area which spans from Cape Freels to Stag Harbour Run. It was known as the ship's graveyard of the east coast. During the summer and autumn months, many Harbour Grace ships, fishermen, and their families travelled through this area on their way to and from the Labrador fishery.



Appendix 1
Map 3 - Harbour Grace

The Avalon Peninsula - Highlighting Harbour Grace and neighbouring communities. Also note Harbour Grace's location as compared with Trepassey and St. John's.



Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Lantana	#90625	246 tons	Malcolm McDonald, Georgetown, Prince Edward Island	A total of seven people on board, including Captain Murchison. There were no survivors.	January 4, 1891 - Lost at Shag Rock, St. Mary's Bay.
S.S.Texas	#65988	2853 tons	Mississippi & Dominion SS. Company	53 men on board, mainly British. Captain Thomas Hunter.	June 4, 1894 - British steamship wrecked at St. Shott's.
Delta	#01816	873 tons	George Edward Francklyn, Merchant, Halifax, Nova Scotia	17 men - Master A. Kennedy, two men from Harbour Grace.	September 13, 1899 - Steamer from Arichat, Nova Scotia, wrecked on Marine Head, Gull Island Point, St. Shott's.
Capulet	#87956	2274 tons	C.T. Bowring & Co. Ltd.	37 crew members - Mainly British, some from the Maritimes. The passengers consisted of 16 women and 46 men.	June 22, 1896 - Lost at Bread Cove, St. Shott's, St. Mary's Bay. Stranded in fog. See the *Harbor Grace Standard* (June 1896) for details of the wreck.
Flora	#75500	1045 tons	William Richards, Merchant, Prince Edward Island	21 men - Mainly British and European.	October 27, 1895 - Abandoned at sea, Cape Race
Oscar (or Oslar) Wendt		477 tons	N.J. Rodbertus, Barth	Captain F. Scharmberg. Crew was saved.	September 26, 1893 - Ran ashore in a dense fog at Pigeon Cove, near Portugal Cove, Trepassey Bay.
Florence	#71865	216 tons	Edwin John Duder, Merchant, St. John's		April 24, 1897 - Schooner, collided with the Allan Line steamer "Scandanavian" off Cape Race. Five people killed (four crewmen and the Captain's wife).
Tiger	#90881	57 tons	Joseph Rogers, Shipowner, Yarmouth	Four men - Captain Isaac Goodwin, Thomas Williams, Clarence Covell, and Ephraim Blades. The crew walked ashore.	September 14, 1893 - Wrecked at Trepassey Bay. Captain suspected of barratry.

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Angler	#101285	29 tons	Walter Grieve, Merchant, St. John's	Captain W. Crawford	1899-1900 - Schooner, went missing around Cape Pine.
J.M. Martin	#101332	31 tons	John Martin, Fisherman, Burin		1900 - Collided at sea and sank near Cape Pine.
Maggie Foote	#101161	25 tons	Thomas, John, and George Foote, Merchants, Grand Bank	All five men on board were lost.	August 22, 1892 - Schooner, sank off Cape Pine.
Byron	#85549	124 tons	Byron Hines, Mariner, Pubnico, Nova Scotia	The crew survived.	August 18, 1891- Lost in a dense fog between Bob's Cove and Bresta Cove, near Trepassey. Ship had approximately 1000 quintals of fish on board.
Arbela		3131 tons	Arbela SS. Company, registered in Liverpool	Captain A.N. Smith	June 10, 1898 - Wrecked at St. Shott's with cargo of lumber. Poor position for salvage. Surveyors report a total wreck (according to *Lloyd's List* dated June 14) and recommend immediate sale.
Tormore	#96076	1698 tons	Thomas Prentice, Glasgow	24 Men - Mainly British and European. Captain J. Ernst	July 15, 1896 - Wrecked at Cuckhold Head, Trepassey Bay. No loss of life. Voyage terminated at Trepassey.
Aslacoe		2524 tons	Bennett & Company, registered in Grimsby, UK	Captain John C. Blenkhen	August 15, 1890 - Stranded, wrecked, at St. Shott's or Mistaken Point (according to the *Northern Shipwreck Database*). Carried a cargo of timber.
Laura					May 13, 1894 - Wrecked at Clam Cove
Mondego	#68404	2564 tons	Archibald Ross, W.H. Ross & Company, London	Master John Rowell. Crew mainly British and European and included 31 hands and 9 cattlemen. All survived.	September 15, 1891 - Lost along Marine Head, St. Shott's

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Orion		4457 tons		Captain Callesen. Crew was saved after being stranded at Bob's Cove Point (near Trepassey).	June 1, 1899 - Danish steamer, ran ashore at Freshwater Point, Trepassey Bay.
Minnie E.	#77950	95 Net tons (Gross ??)	John Aylward, Mariner, Southport, Prince Edward Island	Crew narrowly escaped with their lives.	July 25, 1890 - Wrecked, lost at Cape Race in gale. Vessel instantly broke into splinters.
Corisande			Baine Johnston	Captain William Hughes	January 17, 1898 - Lost at Mistaken Point
Phewderin		734 tons net		Collier, Master. The crew was saved.	September 30, 1893 - Lost at Bannerman's Cove, Mistaken Point, during a dense fog.
Montauk	#93716	2404 tons	Hogan Line, Montauk SS. Company	Captain Jenkins. All survived, captain and crew went to Trepassey.	August 20, 1891 - Ran ashore in a thick fog at Mistaken Point.
Challenge					August 14, 1893 - Lost at Long Beach
Edward P. Boynton		76.57 tons	Edward Groves (formerly of Carbonear)	Captain P.J. Corcoran	February 20,1894 - Gloucester schooner. Drifted from her moorings and went ashore at North Head, St Mary's Bay during a thick snowfall. Much of the cargo was saved.
Prodano	#97528	2476 tons	W. & T.W. Pinkney, The Columbia Steam Navigation Co.	29 men - Mainly British and European. Captain W. Scroggie	October 1, 1899 - Wild Cove, St. Mary's Bay, stranded in fog.
Heligoland		2381 tons	Deutch. Am. Petro Co.		January 11, 1900 - Oil tanker, lost with all hands at St. Shott's
Rhodora		2625 tons	Burrill & Sons	Captain J.C.G. Flawes	September 17, 1897 - British cargo ship wrecked off Horn Head, 17 miles from Cape Race

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Sunrise	#86956	1169 tons	John Wood & Company	Captain A. Judd	July 18, 1895 - British steamship wrecked off St. Shott's. Bound for St. John's with a load of coal
Loademia					1896 - Steamship, lost at Trepassey Bay
Bay State	#109456	6824 tons	White Diamond SS. Company	Captain S.S. Walters	October 3, 1899 - Stranded in fog, wrecked at Cape Race
Bloodhound		36 tons	D. Bishop, Burin?		October 14, 1897 - Schooner, lost somewhere between Cape Pine and Cape Race.
Gladiola	#81749	67 tons	P. & L. Tessier	Captain A. Keough - Crew were all saved.	June 3, 1890 - Lost at Golden Bay, Cape St. Mary's
Grace			Edwin John Duder, Merchant, St. John's	Captain Truscott	January 1890 - Put into Trepassey
Daisy Maud	#92175	53 tons	*The Evening Telegram* (July 21, 1890) lists the schooner as belonging to Robert Inkpen of Burin. However, *Ships and Seafarers of Atlantic Canada* lists the owners as John, Patrick, and William Condon, shipbuilders from Humber Sound. The date and location of the wreck are the same in both sources.		July 1890 - Totally wrecked at Point Lance. The crew was picked up and brought to Trepassey. The wreck at Point Lance is also confirmed by *Ships and Seafarers of Atlantic Canada*.

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Plover	#75986	473 tons	Daniel Condon	Captain Arthur Jackman	January 5, 1890 - Sinking, abandoned at sea 80 miles SW of Cape Race (according to the *Evening Telegram*, January 14, 1890). *Ships and Seafarers of Atlantic Canada* lists the ship as abandoned in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.
Abbeymoor		2405 tons	South Shields S.S. Company		October 16, 1896 - Wrecked on Renews Rock
Lois Jane	#54101	53.99 tons	William Punton Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace	Five men from Harbour Grace (George Hawkins, Albert Courage, Nathaniel Travers, Thomas Courage, Thomas French). All were lost.	September 18, 1891 - Schooner lost off Labrador, in the vicinity of Cape Harrison.
Margaret	#54254	76 tons	Thomas Ridley, Merchant, Harbour Grace	Captain Albert Williams and crew of six men. All survived.	November 14, 1899 - Schooner, lost on the Western Point of Heart's Desire.
Vinco	#66312	60 tons	James Rolls Jr., Merchant - Previously registered and constructed in PEI		1897 - Lost at Small Point (now known as Kingston), near Harbour Grace
Confederate	#66346	109 tons	Robert S. Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace	Captain M. Allan and crew of eight men were rescued.	February 23, 1895 - Brigantine, abandoned at sea in a sinking condition. Captain and crew were rescued by the Anchor Line steamer *Anchoria*.
Helena	#34627	44.38 tons	John Patterson, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1894 - Schooner, lost in Conception Bay
Laurel	#84705	52.01 tons	William Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		November 29, 1898 - Schooner, lost at Long Point, Conception Bay.

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Prince	#82092	52.16 tons	William Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1896 - Schooner, lost at Harbour Grace.
Rervard	#72045	40.75 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1893 - Schooner, broken up at Harbour Grace.
Industry	#70068	37.16 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		October 15, 1900 - Schooner, lost at North East Rock, entrance to Harbour Grace.
Native Lass	#59014	49.73 tons	Thomas Ridley, Merchant, Harbour Grace		September 12, 1900 - Schooner, lost at Seal Cove, Bonavista Bay, near Cape Freels.
Lily	#76013	27 tons	John & Robert Maddock, Merchants, Carbonear		1893 - Lost at Sea, coast of Labrador
Darling		113 tons	Philip Rafuse		December 8, 1894 - Stranded from anchor at Jersey Point, Harbour Grace. The ship was a total loss.
Erling			Captain John Hennessey	Captain Connolly	March 29, 1895 - Caught in a heavy snowstorm and ran ashore near Salmon Cove, Carbonear.
Maggie Smith				Captain Thompson, his son. The remainder of the crew deserted the ship.	April 30, 1892 - British schooner, ran ashore in thick fog at Bradley's Cove, Western Bay. The vessel was eventually floated off and towed to Harbour Grace.
Bounty	#84799	66.52 tons	Robert Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		October 1, 1893 - Schooner, lost on coast of Labrador.
Matilda	#41907	74.98 tons	Robert Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace	Dunn, Master	1893 - Schooner, lost in Bonavista Bay.
Cabot	#82139	43.32 tons	William Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		September 20, 1899 - Schooner, lost on Frog Island Rock, Labrador.

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Leo	#78909	45.28 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1890 - Schooner, lost at Labrador.
Three Brothers	#78898	36.50 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1895 - Schooner, lost at Labrador
Fox	#64242	63.53 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1892 - Schooner, lost on Labrador coast.
Swallow	#76006	60.20 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		October 19, 1900 - Schooner, lost near Dog Island, Labrador.
Mary Jane	#71993	19.38 tons	David Longwell and Peter Taylor, Merchants, Harbour Grace	*The Weekly News* lists Taylor as Master.	1895 - Schooner, lost at Labrador. *The Weekly News* lists July 19, 1894, when a schoner called *Mary Jane* was cut down by another schooner in St. Anthony Harbour.
Arctic	#71934	120.64 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace	Pike, Master	December 1892 - Schooner, foundered at sea 10 miles north of Grand Turk? lighthouse.
Mabel	#71922	45.09 tons	David Longwell and Peter Taylor, Merchants, Harbour Grace		1892 - Schooner, lost on Labrador coast.
Mary Louisa	#66793	46.22 tons	John Munn, Merchant, Harbour Grace		1890 - Schooner, lost at Labrador.
Rover	#37798 (last digit might be 0)	74.44 tons	George and Andrew Rutherford, Merchants, Harbour Grace		November 30, 1894 - Schooner, lost at Random Head, Trinity Bay.

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Flying Arrow			Harbour Grace Bank Fishing Company	Crew survived and returned to Harbour Grace.	October 7, 1890 - Schooner, a total wreck at Broad Cove Point, southside of Harbour Main. The wreck was taken in charge by Captain Moss of the Insurance Club and then sold.
Rosevear		153 tons	John Munn & Co., Harbour Grace	Captain Moses Parsons and five men (Archibald Bray, Lorenzo Parsons, John Ash, Josiah Ash, Stephen French) were all from Harbour Grace. The remaining two men (David Doody and James Lane) were from Carbonear and Goulds respectively.	1893 - Brigantine, sailed from Trapani on December 29, 1892 for Harbour Grace and was never heard from again.
Laurel	#84705	52 tons	John Noel, Southside, Harbour Grace (*Ships and Seafarers* lists William Munn)	Six men, including Albert Noel, master.	November 30, 1898 (approximate date) - Ran ashore at Low Point (*Ships and Seafarers* lists the wreck as occurring at Long Point, Conception Bay, 1898).
Flying Scud	#59040	59 tons (*JHA* lists as 35 tons)	Hon. J.J. Hogerson (*Ships and Seafarers* lists the owner as George Prince, Farmer/Planter, Bonavista Bay)	Six men, including E. Taylor, master.	November 30, 1898 (approximate date) - Ran ashore on the Southern End of Baccalieu Island.
White Squall			A. Goodridge & Sons, St. John's		March 13, 1891 - Small scgooner, caught in ice and driven out of the harbour at Harbour Grace. A dispute followed as several groups of men attempted to claim the vessel.

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Sarah Jane		79 tons	John Munn & Co., Harbour Grace	Captain Penney. Captain and crew escaped. Returned to St. John's, then Harbour Grace	March 16, 1900 - Lost at Northern Head, Bay Bulls. After starting to leak about 40 miles off Cape Race, the schooner made a run for St. John's. However, it struck shore at Bay Bulls. Arrangements were made to save the cargo on the halves. There was insurance on both the cargo and schooner.
Amelia Corkum (listed as Amelia C. in *Harbor Grace Standard*)	#100160	99 tons	Bishop & Monroe, Moses Moore (Merchant, St. John's) also listed	Captain Joseph Merdon (married, from Harbour Grace), William Merchant (steward, married, from Harbour Grace), William Butt (Harbour Grace), John Murray (able-seaman, from Harbour Grace), Carl Stanley (mate), and Seaman Power (from Carbonear)	September 1900 - Schooner, disappeared, assumed lost. Left Oporto for St. John's on September 1 and was never heard from again. Was supposed to be near the Banks when the storm of September 13th raged. The missing ship was first reported in the *Harbor Grace Standard* on October 19th and in the *Trade Review* on December 1.
Mary M.			Munn & Co., Harbour Grace	83 passengers and crew. Saved by the arrival of the *Selina* (Captain Mercer).	July 16, 1897 - Schooner, struck sheet of ice and lost on a passage to Labrador.
Switcher	#35944	51 tons	Charles Ross, Merchant, Harbour Grace	William Yetman, Master	1890 - Wrecked, Stag Harbour, NDB (Notre Dame Bay??)

Appendix 2 - Shipwrecks Affecting Trepassey and Harbour Grace

SHIP	OFFICIAL #	TONNAGE	OWNER	CREW	WRECKED/ABANDONED
Sherbrooke	#50786	89 tons	James Pitts, Merchant, St. John's	Crew mainly from Harbour Grace. Some men also from South Shore Trinity Bay and Bay Bulls. Denis Kearney (Master), John Wiseman, R. George, Thomas Williams, W. Brennan, George Clarke, Archibald Young, James Kidney, Patrick Kearney (brother of captain), B. Clarke, G. Leahy, Anthony Leahy, M. Coombs, Michael McCarthy, Samuel Perrot, and John Sparks. All were saved.	September 16, 1891 - Banker, lost about 100 miles off Cape Spear (*Ships and Seafarers* lists the ship as being lost off the Grand Banks). The crew were saved by the Allan steamer *Nova Scotian*.
Kate				Nicholas Peddle (of Mosquito), master	July 18, 1891 - Wrecked at Southern Tickle, Five Islands, Labrador
Ida			John Rorke, Carbonear	W. Bragg, eight men and two women	October 12, 1891 - Lost in a gale at Cape Harrison, Labrador.
Lizzie	#55731	81.08 tons	William Butt, Planter, Harbour Grace		March 7, 1890 - Schooner, abandoned at sea

Appendix 3 - The *Maggie* Relief Fund - 1897

Total Amount of Subscriptions:	$2371.88
Amounts Distributed in Immediate Relief (up to and including April 5, 1897):	$436.00
Balance of Fund:	$1935.88

Recipients of Fund:

Six (6) widows and seventeen (17) children under the age of fourteen years.

Plan for Allocation of Balance:

(1) To make an allowance of twenty dollars ($20) per year to each widow for five years.

(2) To make an allowance of ten dollars ($10) per year to each child until he/she attains the age of 14 years.

It was proposed that payments be made half yearly on May 1 and November 1 of each year through the Church of England and Methodist clergymen at Goose Bay, Bonavista Bay. In case of the death or re-marriage of any annuitant or of any annuitants ceasing to require help from the fund, the amount placed to his or her credit would be carried to a sinking fund to be distributed upon a fitting basis at the close of the proposed period of five years.

Sources:

"*Maggie* Relief Fund," The Evening Telegram, 5 June 1897, p.4.

"*Maggie* Relief Fund," The Harbor Grace Standard, 25 June 1897, p.4.

Appendix 3 - The *Greenland* Sufferers Relief Fund - 1898

*Of the 48 men who died, there were 18 married, 23 single, and 7 men with unknown marital status. Since their status was unclear, it is unknown if and how their families were included in the fund.

Total Amount of Subscriptions:	$17,000.00
Amounts Distributed in Immediate Relief: ($20 to married persons, $15 to single - this amount is estimated and based on the 41 men known as married or single)	$705.00
Balance of Fund:	$16,295.00

Recipients of Fund:

- Approximately Eighteen (18) widows; number of children under the age of fourteen years unknown.
- Parent of unmarried men.

Plan for Allocation of Balance:

(1) To make an allowance of forty dollars ($40) per year to each widow for five years.

(2) To make an allowance of fifteen dollars ($15) per year to each child until he/she attains the age of 14 years.

(3) To make an allowance of thirty dollars ($30) per year to each of the parents of the unmarried men for five years.

Source:

"*Greenland* Disaster Committee", The Harbor Grace Standard, 24 June 1898, p.1.

"*Greenland* Relief Fund", The Harbor Grace Standard, 9 September 1898, p.4.