

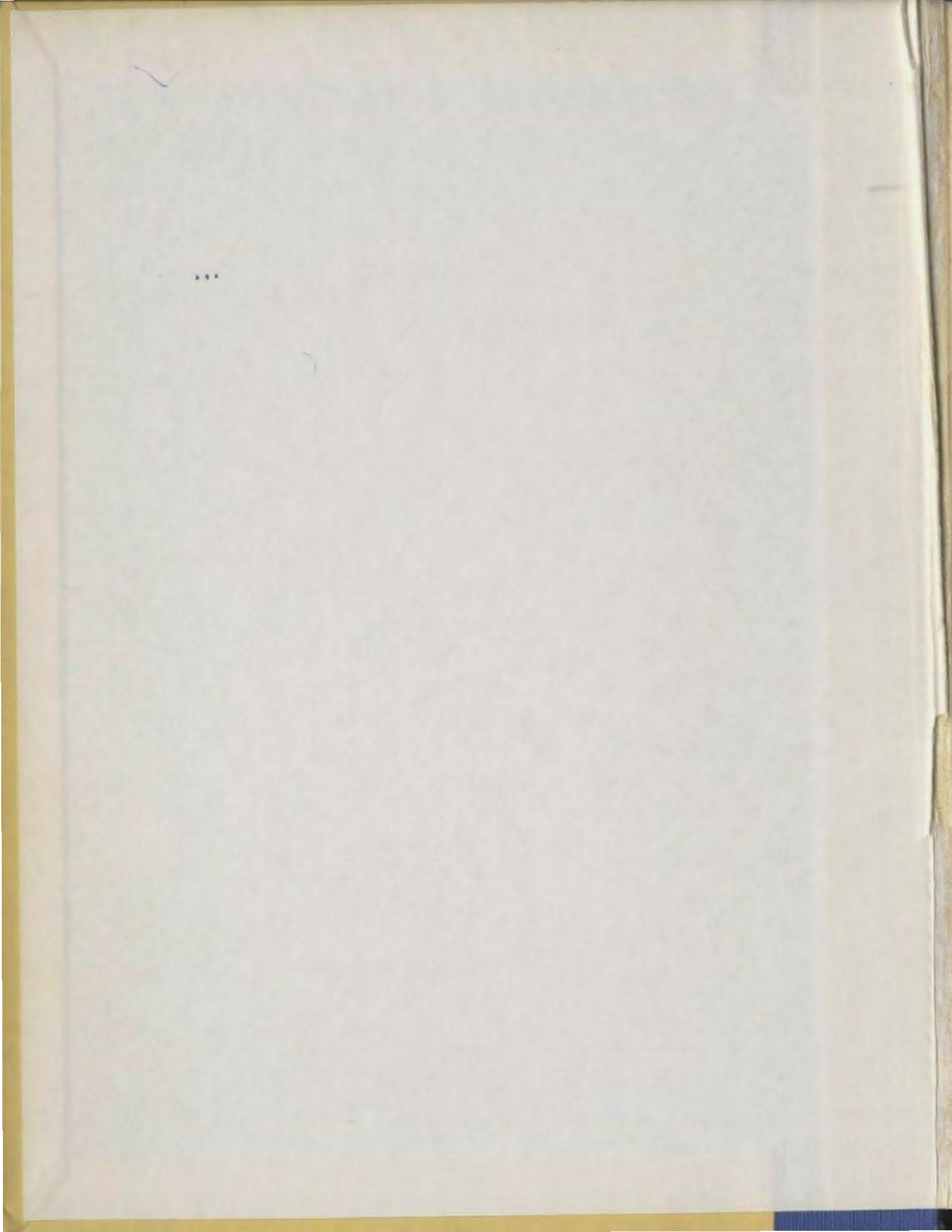
NEWFOUNDLAND IN TRANSITION: THE NEWFOUNDLAND TRADE
AND ROBERT NEWMAN AND COMPANY
1780-1805

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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NEWFOUNDLAND IN TRANSITION: THE NEWFOUNDLAND TRADE
AND ROBERT NEWMAN AND COMPANY

1780-1805

by

Margaret A. Chang

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Between 1775 and 1805, the Newfoundland fishery changed from being primarily "migratory" - carried on by transients from Britain - to being almost completely "sedentary" - carried on by permanent residents of the island. Such a fundamental change called for extensive adaptations on the part of the merchants and traders involved, and indeed, many of them failed to survive. However, the oldest established family in the trade, the Newmans of Dartmouth, not only survived but actually expanded. By 1806 their operation was larger than it had been in 1776 and they controlled a larger share of the entire trade.

Before the outbreak of the American War in 1775 the larger merchants had performed many functions, supplying the local planters, the by-boat men, and the smaller merchants, but concentrating mainly on the operation of fishing vessels and crews on their own account. To a large degree, the changing structure of the fishery can be attributed to the specific conditions of the American War for by ending the traditional drain of population to America during unfavorable periods, the population of the island became more and more permanent. With the operations of the migratory fishery interrupted by the hostilities, the sedentary fishery expanded to fill the gap. The merchants reacted by concentrating on the supply trade to these resident fishermen, and focused more and more on trading with them for

fish rather than fishing for themselves.

The boom that occurred after the end of the American War helped revive both branches of the fishery, and to the casual on-looker, the migratory fishery seemed to have again become dominant. The crash and depression of the late 1780's and early 1790's, however, made it clear that those who resided on the island (the sedentary fishermen) were now a permanent feature of the Newfoundland fishery. If there was to be any reduction in production, it had to be at the expense of the migratory fishery, for there were enough fishermen resident on the island to catch what could be sold and aided by their families they were able to produce it more cheaply. Any incipient revival of the migratory fishery at the end of the depression was nipped in the bud by the outbreak, in 1793, of war with France. By 1800 the structural changes in the fishery had begun to solidify, and the migratory fishery, as it had existed for centuries, had almost totally disappeared.

These fundamental changes in the structure of the British fishery in Newfoundland waters were beyond the control of the merchant firms, which were the major organizing forces for the yearly execution of the fishery. Robert Newman and Company had for many years operated in much the same way as the rest, sending out ships, men and supplies enough to conduct the fishery for the current season, and disposing of their fish at market at the end of the season, before returning to England. During the American War, the firm found its migratory operations hampered by the hostilities and they turned more heavily to trading with those fishermen who were still on the island. At the end

of the war, while resuming fishing for themselves, they maintained their interest in the supply trade. To actively promote this, they set up a new establishment at St. Lawrence on the South Coast where there was a rapidly expanding sedentary fishery. After this early attempt at expansion, the firm was forced to solidify their position, at a time when many of the other merchants were expanding considerably, many of them fatally. As the depression was coming to a close, Newman's were again in a position to expand and again it was on the South Coast among the resident fishermen. This was to remain their style of operation for the next century, and the commitment to the sedentary fishery that they made after the end of the war with America was reinforced.

Besides making the decision to become more involved with the sedentary fishery and the supply trade, the firm was obliged to make internal changes in its operations.

Their growing commitment to the supply trade obliged the firm to make adjustments in their internal operations. The number of their premises for dealing in the barter trade was increased, as were the numbers of their employees concerned with trading, rather than with direct fishing on the firm's behalf. Since their whole operations were trans-Atlantic, considerable changes had to be made in their fleet. The number of fishing vessels decreased in favor of cargo carrying vessels, and the size of the fleet had to be increased to cope with the growing volume of goods and fish to be transported. The crews of their ships became less and less likely to be also fishermen, and their ships

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were put to much more intensive usage. The range of ports between which they plied became wider, and over the years they varied as the firm sought newer and cheaper sources of supplies for their Newfoundland operations.

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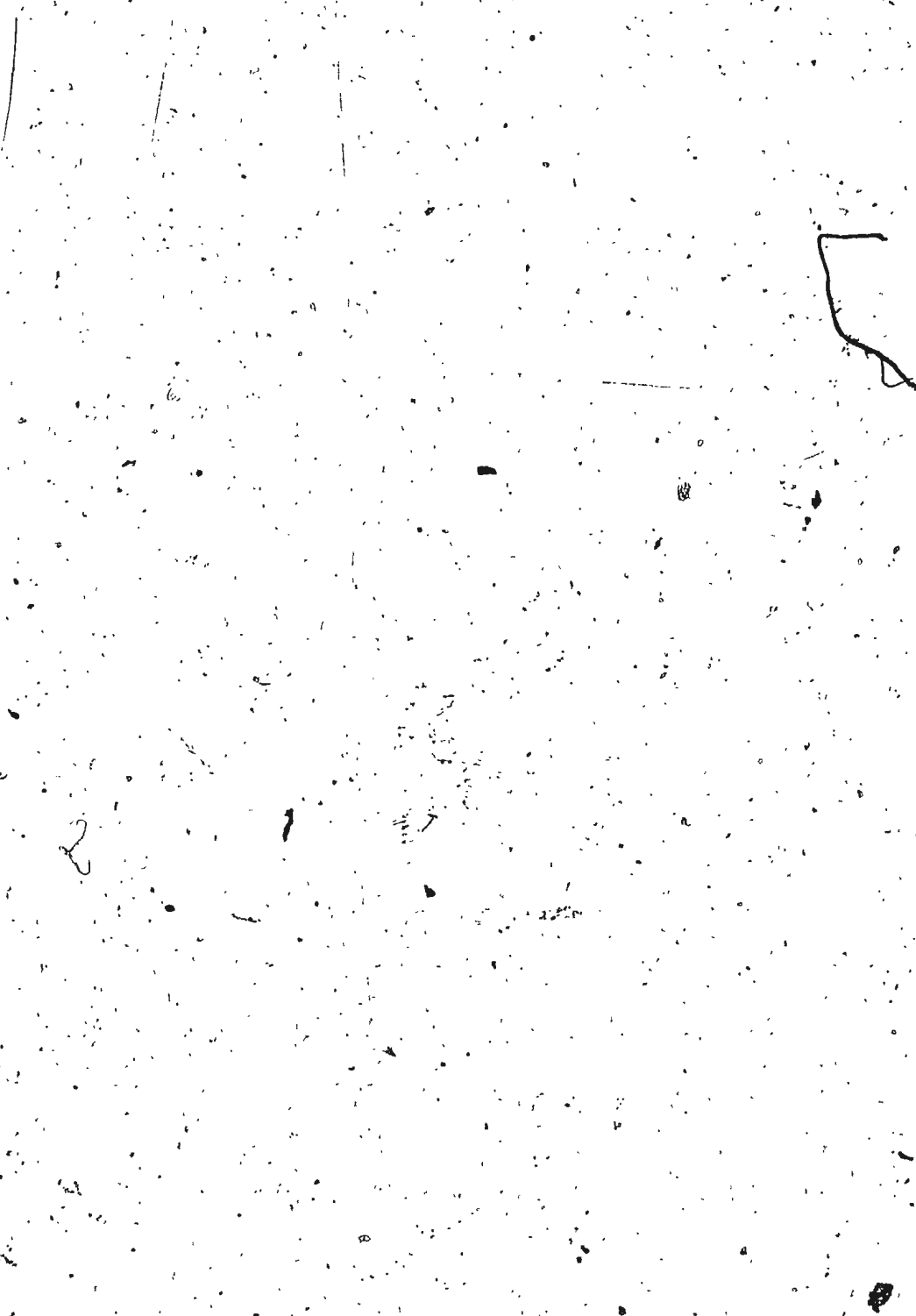




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INTRODUCTION

The Newfoundland fishery had, since the time of its inception, been migratory in character. Ships with men, supplies, and equipment annually travelled to Newfoundland to spend the summer fishing around its coasts. At the end of each season the vast majority returned to their homes in Britain. This remained typical of the fishery until roughly 1775. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, there had been a very basic change, and the migratory aspects of the fishery had faded considerably. This paper wishes to investigate the change from a migratory to a sedentary fishery during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when Newfoundland finally became a place of permanent residence.

The fishery was organized by and around the fishing merchants and it is through a closer look, first at the merchants in general and then at one of the more important merchant firms, that this paper hopes to see the adaptations made during this period. Thus, the initial chapters of this study give a rather general background for the fishery and its organization up to the end of the eighteenth century, a look at the merchants in general, and some idea of the

conditions under which they carried on their activities. The rest of the study focuses on the large and well-established firm of Robert Newman and Company. After giving some family history, an investigation is made into what the firm did during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and then, how it handled and organized that activity. Conclusions are then drawn on the nature of the adaptations made by this successful firm during a period of change and stress in the Newfoundland trade.

The main source of information for Chapter One have been the Colonial Office series 194 and a number of secondary sources, the Ph. D. thesis of K. Matthews in particular. As the official correspondence between Newfoundland and England for the period under study, the C.O. 194 series is a basic set of documents for the period. (It is available locally in microfilm form.) While the statistics obtained from the C.O. 194 series cannot be relied on in any specific instance, for they sometimes are contradictory and at times computed incorrectly, they are valuable indicators of general trends and are the only such statistics taken at the time. Considerable reliance on secondary sources has been necessary for this background chapter, as more intensive research is focused on the Newman papers. I have relied heavily on the various works

of K. Matthews, being the most valuable and extensive items available on this period.

Chapter Two, on the merchant community, has relied heavily on the Name Files of the Maritime History Archives, Memorial University, St. John's. Indexed by family names, these files bring together from many sources much of the information available relating to most of the individuals involved in the Newfoundland trade.

The basic source for the remaining chapters are the Newman papers. The originals are available at the firm's headquarters in London, and a microfilm copy is available at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland. These papers contain cash books, ledgers, journals, a few miscellaneous books, and the very interesting letter books. This material covers a period from about 1775 to the end of the nineteenth century. Besides the letter books for the period up to about 1806, the ledger books for the same period have received the most attention.

Various other sources include the following: several Board of Trade series, the Reports of the Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the Trades to Newfoundland, 1793 and 1817, and Lloyd's Register of Shipping. In the latter, ships are registered alphabetically by name, various details, including names of owners, being entered in subsequent

columns. While this is a very interesting source of shipping information, it must be mentioned that inaccuracies do exist. Ships might, for example, not be removed from the List for some time after they had ceased to operate. Other ships might possibly be in actual operation and yet not appear on the Lists.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND TRADE TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By the end of the eighteenth century the British fishery in Newfoundland waters, commonly known as the 'Newfoundland trade', which had begun early in the sixteenth century¹ as a migratory operation had undergone a profound change, and the fishery was fast becoming a sedentary industry based on a population which resided permanently on the island.

The British fishery to Newfoundland had initially been organised as a migratory venture out of the ports of England's West Country.² Annually fishing ships were fitted out, supplies were put on board, and fishermen-crews were hired to take the ships out to the fishery, often under the personal supervision of the merchant-owner in the role of captain. In Newfoundland itself fishing rooms were needed along the waterfront of a harbour³ from which the fishing crews could operate the small boats in the inshore fishery. Landing their catch daily at the stages, the fishing crew, or a distinct shore crew turned the fish into

¹R. Hakluyt, Voyages of the English Nation (1599-1600), Vol. 11; p. 129.

²This is a regional designation which applies to the South-Western peninsula of England.

³Each harbour was divided into sections, called rooms, upon which stages and flakes could be built. A large, level room along the beach was considered the most desirable.

a dry, salted product. At the end of the season the produce of the voyage was loaded onboard the fishing vessel and the ship and crew sailed to market. With their season's catch disposed of, and with some foreign produce taken onboard for sale in England, the captain and crew set sail for their homes in the West Country. In this system the merchant supplied virtually all the necessities - men, provisions, and equipment - for his own operations and depended for his profit on the sale of his fish in the ports of Continental Europe. Besides these migratory fishing vessels, cargo ships called 'sack ships' also took part in the trade. The sack ships sailed from England to Newfoundland somewhat later in the season and there loaded with fish which they took to market, the fishing vessel in this case returning directly to England.

This rather simple system did not, of course, remain unaltered for long, and by the second half of the seventeenth century there had been a change in, and an elaboration of the older, truly 'fishing' ship. There were still a number of vessels of this earlier type, but along with them appeared a new kind of fishing craft, the 'by-boat'. The by-boat fishery's labour force remained migratory, but its fishing boats did not. This newer form of the fishery depended upon fishing boats which could be left 'by' in Newfoundland over the winters while the men who operated them migrated annually between the West Country and Newfoundland. In order for these men to get to the fishery each season, they were obliged to take passage onboard the large fishing ships, and the continued development of the by-boat fishery slowly turned many of

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the former 'fishing' ships into predominantly passenger ships.⁴

While there still continued to be a few of the oldest type 'fishing' ships engaged in the Newfoundland trade, many of those that still engaged directly in the fishing had, by the early eighteenth century, become banking vessels. Unlike the older style fishing ship, the bankers did not fish in the inshore waters around the island. Instead, the ships and their crews made several extended voyages out to the Banks off the coast. The fish caught on the Banks was of somewhat lower quality since it was stored in the ship's hold for some time before it was landed and cured, and inshore fish always had the preference at the markets.⁵ However, the catch of the bank fishery was much higher and much more dependable than that of the shore fishery. The bank fishery experienced great development over the years and by the early 1770's there were nearly two hundred British bankers fishing at Newfoundland.⁶

By 1775 the number of fishing ships of the original type, large ships operating with big crews in the inshore fishery, had become so reduced as to be inconsequential, and any discussion of the migratory fishery at this point must refer almost exclusively to the activities

⁴For a discussion of the by-boat fishery, see "The By-Boat System", "Opposition to the By-Boat System", and "The By-Boat Fishery", in K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis: Oxford, 1968), pp. 162-168 and pp. 312-313.

⁵For a discussion of the bank fishery, see "The Bank Fishery", in K. Matthews, pp. 309-312.

⁶See Table 4, page 11.

and fortunes of the by-boat and bank fisheries.

The sedentary fishery, on the other hand, was that prosecuted by the long-time or even permanent residents of the island. In the years after its discovery and development, very few men chose to remain on the island over the winter and the numbers of those who did fluctuated widely, closely reflecting the immediate conditions of the fishery. Willing to remain for several years during periods of prosperity, the residents during years of depression either quickly returned to England, or, as great numbers did over the years, departed for the American colonies onboard American vessels which called at Newfoundland to trade.⁷ The sedentary fishery was organized by and around a group of men called planters. Although the planters themselves were more or less sedentary, residing for at least a number of years on the island, the servants whom they employed were predominantly migratory, often contracted for through the migratory merchants and brought over to Newfoundland on the migratory ships. The sedentary fishery operated in the inshore waters, the men working in small boats and returning daily with their catch. At the end of the season the planter either sold his fish to the captain of a market-bound vessel, or sent it 'on freight',⁸ on his own account.

⁷R.G. Lounsbury, "Yankee Trade at Newfoundland", The New England Quarterly, III (October, 1930), p. 620.

⁸In modern terms this is called 'on consignment'.

The change from a completely migratory to a predominantly sedentary fishery did not, of course, occur suddenly, but during the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century the changes accelerated rapidly and by 1805 the Newfoundland fishery, traditionally migratory, was almost completely in the hands of the resident fishermen. Between 1775 and 1803 there occurred several distinctive periods, each of which played a part in the drastic alteration of the traditional structure of the fishery. The American Revolutionary War period from 1775 to 1783 was followed by the Boom period of 1783-1788, by a crash and depression period from 1789 to 1793, by another war period - this time with Revolutionary France - from 1793 to 1801, and finally by a short-lived return to 'normal' conditions during the Peace of Amiens during 1802-1803.

After a period of unprecedented prosperity since 1763,⁹ the British fishery at Newfoundland in 1775 faced war with a new enemy, the former British colonies in America.¹⁰ During the initial years of the war the fishery faced most of its problems on the North American coast. On the eve of hostilities, supplies from America, rum, sugar, molasses, bread, flour and livestock, were considered to be essential for the survival of the British fishery at Newfoundland. The Americans,

⁹K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p. 407.

¹⁰The following discussion of the American War is based on the C.O. 194 series for the years 1775-1783.

provoked by the British Government's closure of the port of Boston, soon banned all contact with Newfoundland. Supplies were cut off, forcing up the cost of provisions prohibitively for the remaining years of the war. As the war continued, American privateering attacks troubled the fishing fleet along the Newfoundland coast, this being particularly so between 1776 and 1779, before the buildup of adequate naval forces around the island. With the coming of 1778, the war took on a new complexity. Just as the naval situation around Newfoundland was improving, and as the merchants developed alternatives to American supplies,¹¹ France, and later Spain, entered the war on the American side. The French entry in 1778 meant that maritime activity near Europe became perilous, and the Spanish entry in the following year made matters absolutely critical by closing all the major markets, except Portugal, to which British fish from Newfoundland was customarily shipped. The result was a series of bankruptcies which eliminated many men in the Newfoundland trade.¹²

¹¹They turned increasingly to supplies from the remaining British possessions in North America, and enlarged the amounts which they brought in from England and Ireland. Those who continued to carry on a migratory business brought in additional supplies for the resident population.

¹²Matthews, History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, pp. 479-480, records the following casualties: Robert Eustace, Perkins and Coughlin, Clark and Company, Moses Kittier, Robert Walker and "a whole string of Bristol merchants in Conception Bay", as well as John Rogers and the Smyths and Whytes.

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The outbreak of the American War caused a reduction in the production of the fishery, as can be seen in the following table. The war having been declared unexpectedly by the Americans, the reduction in the British fishery was not immediate. However, production for the following year, 1776, fell by 100,000 quintals. By 1779, as privateering activity decreased on the Newfoundland scene, production climbed somewhat, only to be hit even worse by the closure of the markets, and thus, the low production for 1781.

TABLE 1
Production of the Newfoundland Fishery
1771-1783^a

Year	No. of Quintals ^b
1771	644,919
1772	759,843
1773	780,328
1774	695,866
1775	658,315
1776	549,903
1777	*
1778	501,140
1779	*
1780	*
1781	260,350
1782	*
1783	*

^aThese Statistics are taken from the Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics. See introduction page viii for cautionary note.

^bAn English quintal was the usual measurement for fish, being approximately 112 pounds.

* The figures for these years were not available.

The war not only affected the production of the fishery, but it also affected the exportation of the yearly catch. As with production, exports declined rather slowly during the early years of the war. However, although the catch had been somewhat improved during 1779, the export picture had deteriorated very badly with the closure of the markets, and thus the export totals for that year were very low. With some readjustment of their exports to alternate markets, like the normally unprofitable West Indies,¹³ the amount of fish exported rose by 1871. These trends can be seen in the following table.

TABLE 2

Exports of the Newfoundland Fishery 1771-1783^a

Year	No. of Quintals
1771	560,204
1772	481,347
1773	489,665
1774	516,358
1775	600,220
1776	495,350
1777	*
1778	386,530
1779	132,780
1780	*
1781	215,862
1782	*
1783	*

^aThese statistics are taken from the Collection of the C.O. 194 Statistics.

* The figures for these years are not available.

¹³The West Indies took only poor quality fish which was used mainly as food for slaves.

The war also affected the resident population of the island. The most important change was not a growth in their numbers. Indeed, after maintaining their numbers for the first few years of the war they experienced a decline after 1779. The change was instead in the degree of permanency which was to mark the residents in the future. The cessation of contacts with the American colonies and the limited resumption of contacts at the end of the war¹⁴ ended the drain of fishermen and planters who normally found passage to the American colonies the quickest means of escape from Newfoundland when times were bad. From now on, there would be no easy escape from the island, and the population was forced, as a result, to become more permanent. The steady numbers of women and children reflected the growth of family life and through natural increase they promised to make Newfoundland a place of permanent residence. Together they insured that a resident population of fishermen would be a continuing factor in any future form of the fishery. The decline which marked all parts of the resident population during the latter half of the war was most marked among the men servants, always the least stable element in its composition. Those who stayed had a serious and lasting stake in the island itself. Most of these figures can be seen in the following table.

¹⁴At the end of the war American food and livestock were permitted to enter Newfoundland on a yearly basis, but such trade was restricted to British vessels. Statute 25 Geo. III C.1.

TABLE 3
The Resident Population of Newfoundland^a
1771-1783

Year	Masters ^b	Men Servants	Women	Children	Total
1771	1,171	5,751	1,182	3,353	11,457
1772	1,197	6,138	1,321	3,250	11,906
1773	1,210	5,708	1,270	3,388	11,576
1774	1,277	6,436	1,479	1,757	10,949
1775	1,396	5,722	1,502	3,818	12,438
1776	1,234	4,816	1,320	3,840	10,747
1777	*	*	*	*	*
1778	1,014	4,245	1,364	3,959	10,582
1779	1,366	4,525	1,356	3,933	11,180
1780	*	*	*	*	*
1781	1,067	2,969	1,147	3,596	8,779
1782	*	*	*	*	*
1783	*	*	*	*	*

^aThese statistics are taken from the Collection of the C.O. 194 Statistics.

^bMasters were the heads of households, or the owners of fishing establishments in Newfoundland.

* The figures for these years are not available.

It can be seen in the above table that the resident population in Newfoundland experienced considerable decline in the latter years of the war. However, the worsening naval situation during 1778 and 1779 hit much more drastically at the numbers of men who normally migrated each year to Newfoundland, for the British government was forced to fit out and man a growing navy. The migratory branch of the British fishery

in Newfoundland went into a serious decline. The banking fleet was the most noticeably hit, especially between 1776 and 1778, the decline in the by-boat fishery coming just a little later, between 1778 and 1779. These figures can be seen in the following table.

TABLE 4

The Migratory Population of Newfoundland^a
1771-1783

Year	Total Ships ^b	Total Men
1771	612	6,460
1772	590	6,212
1773	480	4,089
1774	578	5,217
1775	522	4,545
1776	401	3,976
1777	*	*
1778	248	2,883
1779	*	*
1780	*	*
1781	*	*
1782	*	*
1783	*	*

^aThese statistics are taken from the "Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics".

^bThe total ships refers to the combined totals of British fishing ships, British sack ships, ships from America and European bankers.

* The figures for these years are not available.

The declining migratory population, accompanied by a more stable, if somewhat reduced sedentary population, was soon reflected in the catch of the fishery. The sedentary fishermen took an increasing portion of the annual catch, especially between the years 1778 and 1783. This can be seen in the following table.

TABLE 5

The Catch of the Fishery in Quintals^a
1771-1783

Year	Migratory Catch (Fishing Ships and By-boats)	Sedentary Catch	Total Catch	Sedentary %
1771	377,679	261,240	644,919	40.51
1772	461,238	298,605	759,843	39.30
1773	413,882	366,446	780,328	46.96
1774	383,440	312,426	695,866	44.90
1775	427,775	230,540	658,315	35.02
1776	344,450	205,448	549,903	37.36
1777	*	*	*	*
1778	295,300	205,840	501,140	41.07
1779	147,170	262,500	409,670	64.08
1780	*	*	*	*
1781	87,000	168,150	255,150	65.90
1782	*	*	*	*
1783	*	*	*	*

^aThese statistics have been taken from the "Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics".

The figures for these years are not available.

The outbreak of the American War caused a number of grave problems for the Newfoundland fishery.¹⁵ It suffered from a disruption of its supply system, and a vulnerability to attack at the site of the fishery. As well, it faced a reduction in the manpower available to prosecute the fishery, plus a complete disruption of its marketing arrangements.

The declaration of war in 1775 and the cessation of American supplies on which the fishery was heavily dependent caught the fishery by surprise and caused real scarcity for some time, and continuously high costs for the duration of the war. Facing a situation where increased supplies from Britain and Ireland were still inadequate, the fishery developed its connections with the remaining British colonies in North America. They developed, as well, a system for getting produce such as rum and molasses, up from the British possessions in the West Indies.¹⁶ The vulnerability of the fishery in Newfoundland had been largely overcome by 1779,¹⁷ but nothing could be done about the high risks in the markets as long as the war lasted. Basically, marketing problems during the latter years of the war were not overcome but rather endured, and the merchants were forced to abandon most of the prime market ports and ship fish to the West Indies where the demand was for low grade fish, for which the returns were also low.

¹⁵ This discussion of the effects of the American War on Newfoundland is based on the C.O. 194 series for the years 1775-1783.

¹⁶ These products had previously come via the United States. Now they could sometimes be obtained at Halifax in exchange for fish. Others made trips directly to the West Indies, returning with West Indian goods.

¹⁷ By 1779 the naval force around the island had been increased and the focus for hostilities had shifted to the European side of the Atlantic.

The shortage of labour, which was created by the growing needs of the British Navy resulted in higher wages for the labour which was available. The higher costs attending migratory fishing and the presence of resident fishermen, who were both on the spot and anxious to fish, led to a temporary eclipse of the migratory fishery. The migratory fishing merchants, however, managed to hold on, if in somewhat reduced numbers, by becoming more closely allied with the residents. In return for fishing equipment and provisions, the resident planter, now operating on a reduced scale, and using the 'family' or 'share' plan,¹⁸ turned over the produce of his season's voyage to the merchant. This became, in fact, a barter trade in fish and provisions between the merchants and the residents. The very conditions which forced the migratory fishing to decline during the war gave the resident fishery a chance to take its place, and the structure of the fishery became adjusted during the war years to a new regime.

The end of the war, of course, reversed many of the conditions which had prevailed, but the structure of the fishery was permanently altered. Perhaps naturally, what resulted in the years after the war was an amalgamation of both the older and newer systems within the operations of individual merchants, an amalgamation which would, however, within another decade prove to be essentially unstable.

¹⁸The essence of both of these 'plans' was the absence of wages, the men getting instead a portion of the season's catch.

At the end of the American War in 1783, the markets reopened, the risks of sea-passage were reduced, and a period of general prosperity revived all branches of the fishery. Of immediate interest to all concerned was the relationship which would be established between Newfoundland and the newly independent United States, relative to the importance of American food supplies for the fishery, on which it had been so heavily dependent before the war. After initial confusion, the British Government reached a temporary solution by allowing American supplies to enter Newfoundland, but only if carried on British shipping.¹⁹ This decision was yearly re-affirmed and in spite of early objection by some of the merchants,²⁰ most of them had within a few years come to accept and depend upon American supplies again.²¹

After the end of the war, conditions favoured the British fishery at Newfoundland, for the long-hungry markets of Southern Europe offered high prices for cod, and the rival fisheries of France and America, severely damaged and reduced, did not revive sufficiently to pose any threat. In response to these conditions the fishery underwent a considerable expansion, slowly at first, and then more rapidly. Those merchants who had remained in the fishery during the war by bartering

¹⁹ Statute 25 Geo. III C 1.

²⁰ The merchants of Dartmouth and Poole seem to have opposed the decision most strongly, supported by some of the Quebec merchants who hoped to carry the supply trade to the island. See K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p. 508.

²¹ B.T. 5/6.4 Minutes of the Board 14 Jan., 1790. C.O. 194/21.374. Routh to Fawkenor 9 Feb., 1791. B.T. 1/2.165. Lester to Fawkenor 2 Jan., 1791.

with the residents, while continuing to deal with the resident fishermen, and indeed to expand their dealings with them, also quickly re-entered the direct fishery as well, again employing fishing crews and boats on their own account. Although many of the former by-boatmen found that their rooms had been engrossed by the residents during the war, the prosperity at hand induced them to re-enter the trade. In addition to these men with experience there also swarmed into the fishery new men, "new adventurers", men with little or no experience in the trade but anxious to partake of the bountiful returns of a booming trade. While the recovery and rise of the migratory fishery was perhaps more dramatic, the sedentary fishery as well was taking advantage of the post-war period. Their numbers experienced steady growth, and some of the individual residents rose beyond the status of common fishermen (as did Hutchings²² of St. John's), while many of the smaller merchants became permanently resident.²³ The enormous expansion of manpower in both the migratory and sedentary branches of the fishery can be seen in Table Six.

Heavy market demand, an abundant labour supply and a succession of good fishing seasons ensured a steady increase in fish production, most of which was shipped off to the profitable markets of Southern Europe. This continued year after year, as can be seen in

²² See Hutchings Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

²³ C.O. 194/35.174 Elford to Sydney, 16th Dec., 1784.

TABLE 6

Manpower Expansion in the Newfoundland Fishery:
1781-1788^a

Year	Men on British Fishing Ships	Men on Sack Ships	Men on By-Boats	Sedentary men (Masters and Servants)
1781	485	1,257	*	4,035
1782	*	*	*	*
1783	*	*	*	*
1784	2,603	547	2,317	5,106
1785	2,866	866	2,424	4,604
1786	2,651	1,426	4,743	6,190
1787	3,112	1,487	3,213	10,185
1788	4,306	1,423	2,107	10,794

^aThese statistics have been taken from the Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics.

* The figures for these years are not available.

Table seven, gathering speed after a somewhat slow start in the confusion of the immediate post-war period. Within a few years after the war ended the migratory fishery had resumed its position as the major producer of fish, sustained by the abnormally high rate of returns to be obtained from the fishery at the moment. However, although the proportion taken by the sedentary fishery dropped, their total catch remained substantial, an indication of their entrenched position in the fishery.

TABLE 7

Production of the Fishery in Quintals^a

1783-1788

Year	Migratory Catch	Sedentary Catch	Total Catch	Migratory % of Total
1783	*	*	*	*
1784	224,700	212,616	437,316	51.38
1785	282,366	262,576	544,942	51.82
1786	312,595	257,547	569,142	54.75
1787	390,395	341,620	732,015	53.33
1788	491,865	457,105	948,970	51.83

^aThese statistics are taken from the Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics.

* The figures for these years are not available.

While the post-war fishery represented an amalgamation of the migratory and residential branches of the fishery, Newfoundland's economic and social life was growing more diversified, and tended to emphasize on-the-spot activities and development more than it had ever done before. Increasingly, the merchants who were engaged in the fishery found it necessary to maintain resident partners or agents in Newfoundland. These were needed to handle the provisions trade, to organize the winter employment of the firm's employees, many of whom were hired for two summers and one winter, as well as to supervise the loading, etc. of the firm's shipping, which was increasingly being used on a year-round basis.

By this time resident houses and agents were being established in Newfoundland by men who had entered, not from the West Country as was traditional, but from outside auxiliary trades, such as the West Indies and Canadian trades whose contacts with Newfoundland, stimulated during the shortage of supplies during the last war, had prospered, developing firm links with the island, especially at St. John's.²⁴

Besides those who engaged in the fishery, either directly or through provisioning the residents, there were now some who acted as middlemen collecting fish and oil by peddling in the outports and selling the collected produce to others who would export it to the ports of Southern Europe. The Irish particularly became prominent in the operation of taverns and huxter shops,²⁵ catering to the employees of the fishing merchants and being paid with bills of exchange issued to them as wages. Others paid with fish and the Irish merchants occasionally found themselves involved in the fish trade, if indirectly. Among the other small businesses superimposed upon the direct fishing were a growing number of tradesmen and service industries, including barbers, tailors, watchmakers, and shoemakers, among others.²⁶ Thus, during the boom period, Newfoundland life grew more diversified, and new activities, less intimately tied to actual fishing, became more common.

²⁴ K. Matthews, Lectures on the History of Newfoundland 1500-1830. Memorial University, 1973, pp. 161-163.

²⁵ A huxter's shop resembled the premises of a rather stationary peddler. One of its main attractions was the dispensing of liquors.

²⁶ Census taken in St. John's 1794-1795. Gosling Memorial Library, St. John's.

The prosperity of the post-war period led to the development of several dangerous trends in the Newfoundland trade. For one, it tempted men with little or no experience to enter the trade. The Newfoundland trade in normal times was extremely precarious, and with the return of such normalcy the new adventurers would almost surely be wiped out, adding to the uncertainties and the instability endemic to the trade. Worse than that, through inexperience they might act against the best interest of the trade in the long run, bringing not only themselves into disaster but also the older merchants who were the mainstay of the trade.²⁷ This, in fact, is what happened during 1784 when 'partial' adventurers sent so many cargoes to Newfoundland on speculation that both they and the regular merchants lost heavily.²⁸ The established merchants presumably had a long-term stake in the trade while the newcomers' main interests lay in a few years of quick and high returns while the boom lasted. Nevertheless there seems to have been little distinction in the degree of restraint exhibited by either group. The established merchants, too, were anxious to make even more profits and by 1785 many of them 'had greatly augmented their outfits'.²⁹ To finance their expansion they sought and obtained extensive credit both

²⁷ B.T. 5/2.197 Buchanan's evidence. 10 Jan., 1786.

²⁸ PRO 30/8.346. James to Pitt. 30th Jan., 1786.

²⁹ The St. John's merchants especially engaged in a tremendous amount of cross-credit financing ... K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, pp. 553-554.

in Newfoundland and in England, which could only be repaid while conditions remained abnormally favourable.³⁰ Wages had remained high after the end of the war, but additional men were rapidly brought into the system as almost everyone, migratory merchant and planter alike, scrambled to make the most of a very advantageous situation. The rising numbers of men employed in the fishery can be seen in Table 6, page 17.

For a number of years the demand created during the war years could not be satisfied, and the response was to expand the amount taken each year at Newfoundland. Year after year the total production of the fishery rose, as can be seen in the following table, with the bulk of the catch being shipped off to the markets of Continental Europe, bringing them by 1788, to a point of near saturation. As the season of

TABLE 8

Total Catch of the Fishery 1784-1789^a

Year	Total Catch (quintals)
1784	437,316
1785	544,942
1786	569,142
1787	732,015
1788	948,970
1789	771,569

^aThese statistics are taken from the Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics.

³⁰The unusually high demand for fish at the end of the American War could not be expected to last forever, nor could the temporary monopoly of the fishery enjoyed by the British.

1788 progressed the more cautious merchants feared that the boom was about to end. Indeed, at the end of the season there remained 300,000 quintals of fish which could not be sold at all.³¹

In spite of the bad markets at the end of the 1788 season, the hectic pace which had prevailed since the end of the war continued into the season of 1789. The shipment of yet another huge catch to the markets more than satisfied the demand. As the earliest cargoes reached the markets and as news of their sales filtered back to Newfoundland, the merchants found their worst fears confirmed. The price of fish had dropped³² and disaster faced most of those in the Newfoundland trade. The bad news affected the total production of the fishery for the year. The boom was indeed at an end. The crisis had been brought on by what was, essentially, over-expansion of the British fishery along the Newfoundland coast, aggravated during the last year or two by a revival of the French and American fisheries.³³ The prosperity which had stimulated and revived the Newfoundland fishery thus caused, especially for the migratory branch, a fatal over-expansion. The total production of the fishery declined from a peak of 948,970 quintals in 1788, to 552,260 quintals in 1792, and, in 1793, with the outbreak of war, to 437,460 quintals.

³¹C.O. 194/21.220. Routh to Hawkesbury. 23 May, 1789.

³²In Newfoundland the price fell by 2/6d. a quintal, and by even more in Europe. K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, pp. 552-553.

³³Ibid., pp. 501-502.

The decline was initially most apparent in the production of the sedentary fishermen. In 1788 they had produced over 450,000 quintals. By 1789 that had dropped to roughly 340,000. With the continuing depression in 1790 the drop was less precipitous, the catch falling by another 37,000 quintals.³⁴ Again during 1791 the sedentary fishery underwent a convulsive reduction, falling by yet another 70,000 quintals.³⁵ Although the sedentary fishery managed to survive the period of depression, it was a time of great hardship and new features entered its structure which lasted long after the depression ended. The speculative atmosphere of the boom period was replaced by one of caution and prudence, and the men who survived in the trade attempted to hang on to what they had salvaged from the crash. The migratory merchants, the lone remnants of the migratory element of the trade, again turned to the bartering of provisions with the residents who had to fish to survive and who could utilize the members of their families as unpaid labour.

³⁴ These statistics are taken from the "Collection C.O. 194 Statistics".

³⁵ Ibid.

In Newfoundland these men lived, and to live on the island they had to fish if not independently on their own account, then it would have to be for whoever would keep them in supplies and equipment from year to year. The supply merchants and the resident fishermen became more and more closely tied together, each dependent upon the other. For the resident, the tie to the merchant became almost a permanent one, for the produce of one year's voyage often did not leave enough to start off the next season without debts. If the fisherman allowed himself to be bound to catching fish for one merchant, and if he allowed his merchant to fix the prices both for fish and provisions, then he could also expect to be carried through a number of disastrous seasons by this same merchant.³⁶ For the supplying merchant, on the other hand, there was more security in supplying the residents, for the risks involved in the outlay of money for one year could be spread over a number of years, through adjustments in the price of supplies and the price given in return for fish taken each year. It seems to be about this time that supply merchants made stronger efforts to keep specific fishermen dealing with only themselves.³⁷ This system thus brought into

Independent fishermen could, and did, do better when times were good, but they risked starving during bad seasons when supplies on credit were absolutely essential.

³⁷The agent is not to issue provisions to those who are not regular dealers without a written agreement for a certain quantity of their spring fish ... "I wish you to agree with these people as early as possible as I am of opinion you will have a pedlar with you early..." A letter from Newman's in Dartmouth to their agent in Newfoundland, Feb. 28, 1796. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

the structure of the fishery a greater element of precious security for both merchants and fishermen alike.

While this proved to be a very depressed period for the resident fishermen, it proved to be fatal to the fishery still carried on annually from England, and it marked the beginning of the end of the role of the migratory by-boat and bank fisheries in the Newfoundland trade. Of the two branches of the migratory fishery the by-boat fishery was the hardest hit and it quickly faded away. The boatkeepers who re-entered the fishery at the end of the American War found that the cost of supplies and labour was very high, and even worse, that during their absence some of their traditional fishing rooms had been occupied by the residents. They were thus forced either to pay rent for rooms or to seek out new rooms in unknown areas, both of which enforced additional costs. The higher than usual returns of the boom period had allowed them to absorb such costs, but with the onslaught of a depression reduced profits could not cover their costs. Individual by-boatmen either left the fishery altogether and returned permanently to England, or entered some other aspect of the fishery, such as joining the ranks of the resident fishermen. As can be seen in the following table, compared to the 1770-1775 period the by-boat fishery of the first decade of the nineteenth century had become completely insignificant. A slight revival of the migratory fishery during 1791 was reflected in the strength of the by-boat fishery, but any incipient revival in either by-boats or bankers was effectively cut off by the outbreak of war with France in 1793.

TABLE 9

The By-Boat Fishery 1770-1810^a

Year	No. of Boats	Year	No. of Boats
1770	444	1791	584
1771	559	1792	*
1772	605	1793	295
1773	560	1794	214
1774	518	1795	78
1775	557	1796	*
1776	485	1797	49
1777	*	1798	*
1778	648	1799	*
1779	*	1800	*
1780	*	1801	28 ^b
1781	*	1802	-
1782	*	1803	-
1783	*	1804	-
1784	344	1805	-
1785	540	1806	-
1786	413	1807	-
1787	451	1808	-
1788	317	1809	-
1789	533	1810	-
1790	387		

^a These statistics are taken from the "Collection C.O. 194 Statistics".

^b This is the last entry for the number of By-Boats.

* The figures for these years are not available.

The banking fleet which travelled annually to the Newfoundland fishery was also hard hit by the crash. Their voyages were especially vulnerable, for they depended upon crews of very skilled and consequently highly paid men. Their product, too, was vulnerable for the better quality fish produced on shore always had the preference at the markets, especially in times of overabundance. The decline of the by-boat masters and men had also added to the troubles of the bankers. The passages paid by the by-boat masters and men for transportation to the fishery formed an important supplement, and the bankers had come to rely on this extra margin. The declining returns obtained from their voyages to the banks was accompanied, most inopportunistly, by a decline in their supplementary income from passages. The declining significance of European-based bankers can be seen in the following table, and although a few continued to come, by 1833 they were of very little importance.

The economic troubles of the fishery during the late 1780's were intensified by the untimely breakdown of the island's courts upon which the settlement of all property disputes depended. By the time of the American War the increased population and resulting increase in the number of cases to be heard had forced the officials of the various existing courts to take on functions which did not belong to them. While the majority of the cases involved small sums, or involved merchants vs. planters, or planters vs. servants, not too much attention was paid to the illegality of the presiding court. Any major conflicts between the more important merchants were settled after they returned to England in the fall.

TABLE 10

The European Bankers 1780-1833^a

Year	Bankers	Year	Bankers	Year	Bankers
1780	*	1798	*	1816	41
1781	*	1799	*	1817	48
1782	*	1800	*	1818	47
1783	*	1801	17	1819	38
1784	*	1802	58	1820	28
1785	141	1803	64	1821	25
1786	181	1804	21	1822	19
1787	*	1805	12	1823	15
1788	*	1806	*	1824	13
1789	182	1807	20	1825	15
1790	156	1808	5	1826	15
1791	158	1809	19	1827	9
1792	187	1810	10	1828	10
1793	63	1811	10	1829	11
1794	600	1812	17	1830	8
1795	53	1813	3	1831	7
1796	*	1814	13	1832	8
1797	34	1815	30	1833	9

^aThe statistics are taken from the "Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics".

^bThe figures for these years are unavailable.

However, with the increasing tendency of merchants to settle in Newfoundland, and to have their mutual differences tried in local courts³⁸

³⁸ "By 1792 two-fifths of all litigation was between merchants", K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p. 570.

especially after 1775, the legal system became severely strained and faced an almost inevitable breakdown.³⁹ By 1780 the system had begun to fall apart, and the reversal of a Governor's decision by an English court had led the Governor to refuse to handle civil cases.⁴⁰ The climax came in 1788, late in the boom period, when George Hutchings of Dartmouth and Bay Bulls, challenged a surrogate's decision against him.⁴¹ The decision was reversed in England, and when the news reached Newfoundland the administration of justice in the island came to a complete halt. The system was in such confusion that the various courts refused to perform what were indeed their legal functions, because of the extreme difficulty of deciding what might be a legal case. The expanded activities of the fishery during the boom years had increased the number of cases handled annually, and the breakdown of the courts created a huge backlog that seriously intensified the financial disaster of the following season. Merchants were forced to go bankrupt, often through a series of interlocking debts, where, unable to collect their own just debts, they could not repay their own creditors. The Governor's attempt

³⁹ Reeves in 1793 wrote "But should a wealthy merchant become defendant in one of these courts, it was not so sure that he would approve the same legal course, or yield the same obedience to a sentence..." "But a time was coming when a judicature, that stood so weak a foundation, was to be shaken." J. Reeves, History of the Government of Newfoundland, pp. 158-9.

⁴⁰
Ibid.

⁴¹
See Hutchings Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

to set up a Court of Common Pleas⁴² was quickly declared to be illegal by the British Government and, in the meantime, the outports received no civil justice at all.⁴³

The disagreements among the merchants, combined with the uncertainty of the British Government, delayed the establishment of an effective legal system until 1791. Even after this, the new legal system was found to be ineffective in some areas. The outports, especially, found that trials held in St. John's alone proved to be both time- and money-consuming.⁴⁴ The unhappy situation was somewhat remedied during 1792 when the Court of Civil Judicature, which had been set up during the previous season with a Chief Justice and two lay assessors only, was altered to create surrogates who could issue justice on the spot in the outports,⁴⁵ reducing the volume of cases that had to be taken to St. John's. In a situation of extreme financial turmoil the need for a quick and effective legal system for the collection of just debts was absolutely critical. Unable to collect what was due to them, and thus unable to face their own creditors either among the other merchants in Newfoundland or back in England, the fall of one firm

⁴²C.O. 325/7.184. First Report of the Committee to enquire into the trade of Newfoundland. Graham's evidence, p.4.

⁴³During the following year the Governor spent less than two weeks in the island, and that at St. John's. C.O. 194/38.196-198.

⁴⁴B.T. 1/2.51 Petition of the merchants to John Reeves, July 1791.

⁴⁵Statute 32 Geo. III C 46.

entailed the ruin and decline of yet others, some of which might have been avoided or lessened if the legal system had not collapsed just then.

By the first few years of the nineteenth century some very basic changes had become apparent in the structure of the fishery and in the composition of the population. The structure of the fishery in many ways marked a re-affirmation of the conditions which had marked the years of the American War. Once again the surviving merchants reverted to handling a supply trade with the resident fishermen almost completely, and the amalgamated structure of combined migratory fishing and sedentary dealings broke down permanently in favour of the sedentary fishery.

Although the depression of the late 1780's caused a real decline in all aspects of the fishery, the sedentary fishery became, as it had been during the years of the American War, the major producer of the yearly catch. Throughout the boom period the residents, in spite of their being overshadowed by a mushrooming migratory fishery, had maintained themselves as a powerful bloc in the fishery. They had been denied an easy escape from Newfoundland with the cessation of American shipping to the island. They were now present in numbers sufficient to guarantee natural increase and were able to make a living only by fishing. Thus, any reduction in the production of the fishery would have to be mainly at the expense of the migratory fishery. This did happen, for although the annual sedentary catch continued to decline for the rest of the century, their portion of the total catch continued to climb. By the end of the century the fishery, poor as it was at the moment, was

effectively in the hands of the resident fishermen and would remain so in the future. This can be seen in the figures for 1801-1810 in the following table.

TABLE 11

Migratory and Sedentary Percentages of the Total Catch 1801-1810^a

Year	Migratory % of Total	Sedentary % of Total
1801 ^b	23.59	76.41
1802	*	*
1803	18.77	81.23
1804	12.89	87.11
1805	6.16	93.84
1806	*	*
1807	11.20	88.80
1808	2.20	97.80
1809 ^b	7.65	92.35
1810 ^b	5.64	94.36

^aThese statistics are taken from the Collection C.O. 194 Statistics.

^bThe figures for these years are incomplete.

*The figures for these years are unavailable.

The other basic change in Newfoundland was the population increase and even more importantly the changing source of such increase. During the years of the war with France the numbers of women, men and children all experienced an increase. Somewhat later, just before peace

was established, despite a drop in the numbers of men, the numbers of women and children continued to climb, as did some signs of domesticity, such as the number of those born since the previous autumn and the number of dwellings erected. See the table below.

TABLE 12

Inhabitants, 1790-1810^a

Year	Masters	Men Servants	Mis- tresses	Women Servants	Children	Births	Homes
1790	1,874	6,488	1,423	742	5,468	507	2,305
1791	1,880	5,705	1,542	724	5,348	436	2,270
1792	1,996	6,726	1,602	833	5,306	*	*
1793	1,783	4,881	1,671	822	5,898	465	2,172
1794	2,058	5,978	1,827	886	6,238	541	2,327
1795	2,042	5,021	1,896	792	7,250	511	2,255
1796	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1797	1,790	3,590	1,696	634	5,981	660	2,144
1798	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1799	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1800	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1801 ^b	2,264	1,907	1,899	763	6,513	453	2,523
1802	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1803	2,823	4,040	2,486	814	8,139	405	3,234
1804	2,973	4,738	2,965	612	8,294	701	3,403
1805	3,257	5,003	2,850	691	8,883	688	3,364
1806	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1807	3,415	5,427	3,121	909	10,498	1,083	3,671
1808	3,446	4,291	3,091	1,081	11,209	991	3,473
1809	3,761	4,569	3,052	1,038	10,758	677	3,811
1810 ^b	1,902	2,108	1,714	704	4,770	645	1,835

^aThese statistics are taken from the Collection of C.O. 194 Statistics.

^bThe figures for these years are incomplete.

* The figures for these years are unavailable.

Much of the increase in the population by this time was due to natural increase and this was a very basic change. Newfoundland normally experienced severe population fluctuations upon the arrival or departure of men, chiefly migratory servants engaged in the fishery: Under such conditions the population strongly reflected the fortunes of the fishery. Now, however, the fishery could go into an extreme depression and the population would remain relatively constant. In the face of adverse wartime conditions of impressment and hostilities the Newfoundland population continued to increase as can be seen in the above table. By the end of the eighteenth century, firmly rooted, the residents of Newfoundland increased spontaneously in the face of poor conditions in the fishery. Their very increase pressured them to develop alternate ways of making a living and the development of sealing, the Labrador fishery, and increased attention to agriculture and trades broadened the economy of the island during the following century.

For a discussion of the Newfoundland economy during the nineteenth century, see S. Ryan, "The Newfoundland Cod Fishery in the Nineteenth Century", especially Chapter One, The Newfoundland Economy. M.A. Thesis, Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1971.

CHAPTER II

THE MERCHANT COMMUNITY

Since its inception in the middle of the sixteenth century the Newfoundland trade had been dominated by the fishing merchants from the West Country of England. That the situation persisted until late in the eighteenth century can be seen in the remarks of an on-the-spot official, Lieutenant-Governor Elford, the garrison commander in St. John's in 1785.

I wish to be understood as meaning the merchants of Dartmouth or Poole, and their agents, when I mean the principal inhabitants ... Poole and Dartmouth are the principal support of this country ... consequently they are the props which support Newfoundland and when both or either of these fails Newfoundland will be shaken to the core.¹

It was no accident that the West Country merchants should be so powerful in the Newfoundland fishery. In large measure it was due initially to the fact that traders from other English ports possessed the wealth and connections to turn to other branches of maritime commerce when the Newfoundland fishery went through one of its many periods of depression.² The West Country merchants, on the other hand, once heavily

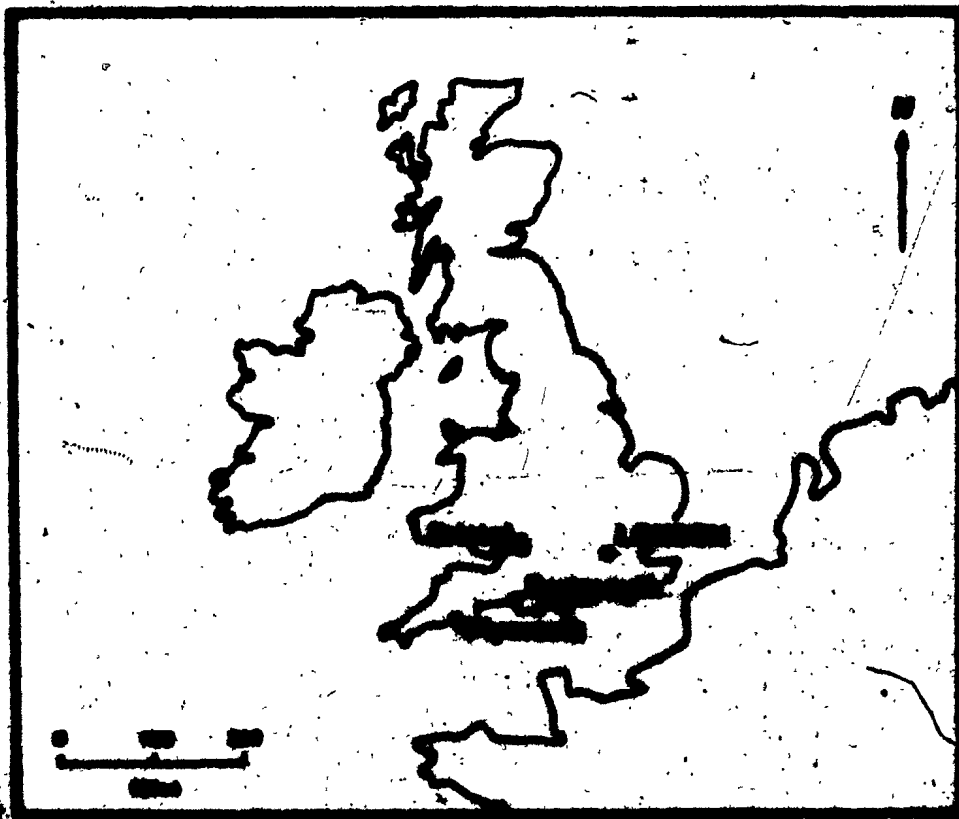
¹C.O. 194/36.13. Elford to Sydney, 14 July, 1785.

²Keith Matthews, The West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, Mimeographed Paper presented to the Newfoundland Historical Society, 1968, p. 2.

Involved in the Newfoundland trade, could not easily turn to other trades and were forced to make the most of the fishery in good times and bad. Their geographic position also gave them an edge over other English ports like London in the annual race to be the first at the fishery.³

See the map below.

WEST COUNTRY GEOGRAPHICAL ADVANTAGE



³ *ibid.*, p. 69. "At the wrong end of the English Channel, her (London) ships had to prepare to meet South Westerly winds all the way down and could hence never guarantee to reach Newfoundland in time to catch the fishing season."

By the late eighteenth century, the West Country merchants also had a number of accumulated advantages, long experience in a demanding trade, an accumulated capital, a virtual monopoly on skilled fishermen, and possession of the best fishing rooms in Newfoundland.⁴

It has been noted that as early as 1676 the West Country towns involved in the fishery tended to fish in very specific areas between Trepassy and Bonavista. Recruits for the fishery came from the ports nearest them, and settled in the areas to which these ships sailed to fish for the season.

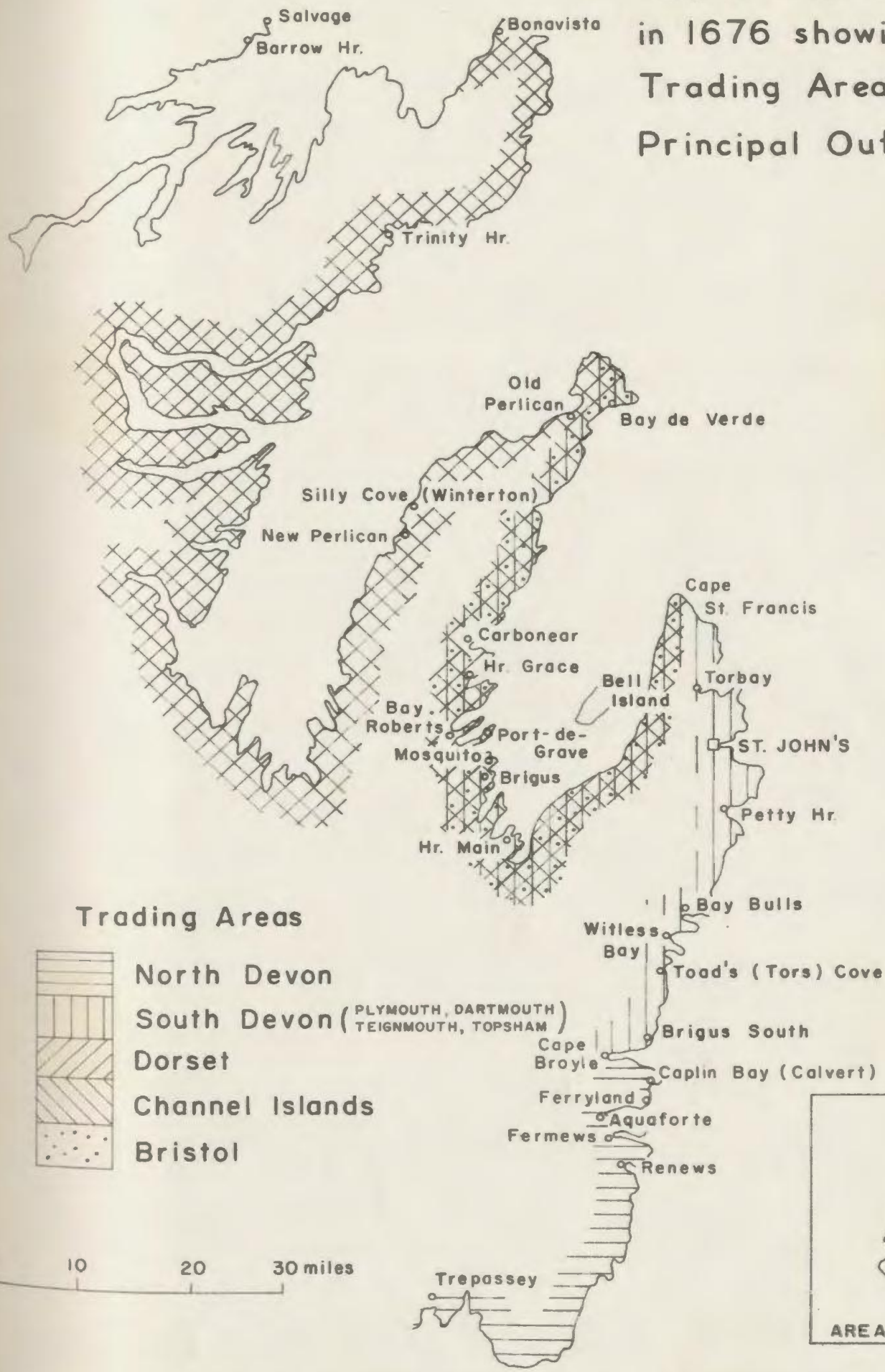
Thus the North Devon towns of Bideford and Barnstaple concentrated their fishery in the area between Trepassy and Cape Broyle - most of the settlers in those communities came from North Devon. The South Devon towns of Exeter, Plymouth and Dartmouth fished most heavily between Cape Broyle and Harbour Grace, and thus, for example, most St. John's residents came from South Devon. Harbour Grace and its environs contained settlers from Bristol, for the Bristol merchants tended to confine their trade to that area. From there we run into the North Shore of Conception Bay which was dominated by the fishermen and merchants of Poole and Weymouth in Dorset, Trinity and Bonavista Bays were also mainly settled by Channel Islands and Dorset folk, although men from villages around Dartmouth - which was by far the largest port in the fishery at that time - could be found in most parts of the English shore.⁵

The following maps give some idea of (1) the trading areas in Newfoundland based on the period around 1676, and (2) the major ports in the West Country.

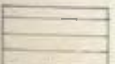


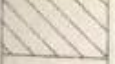
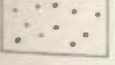
⁴ Ibid., p. 426.

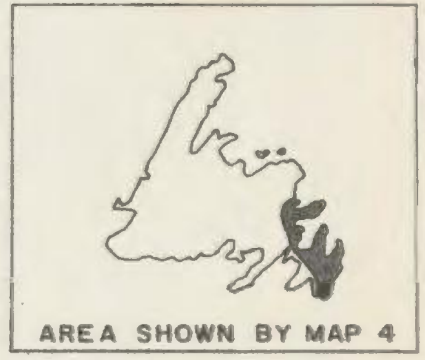
⁵ K. Matthews, Lectures, pp. 217-218.

Map 2 The English Shore in 1676 showing Trading Areas and Principal Outports

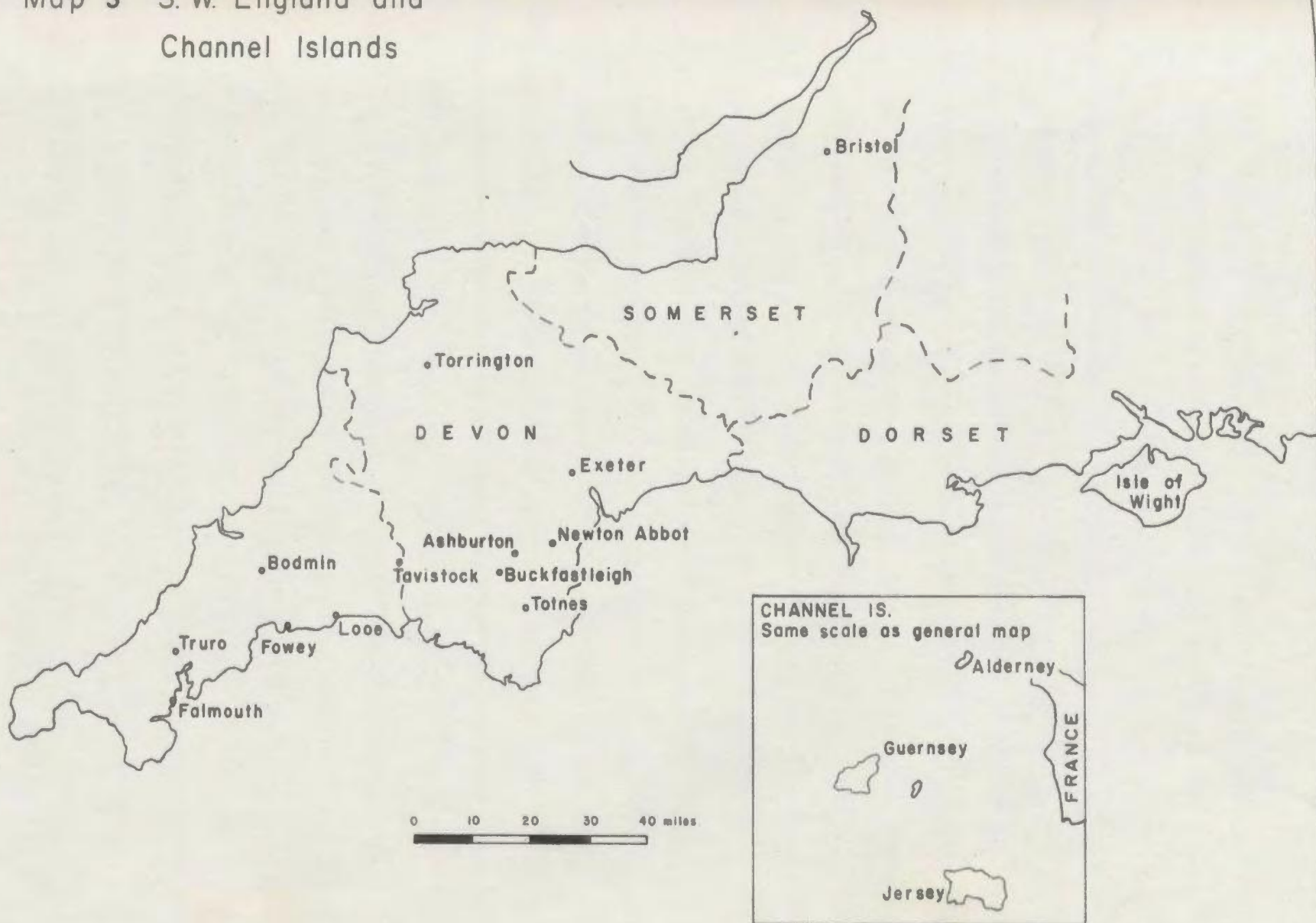


Trading Areas

-  North Devon
-  South Devon (PLYMOUTH, DARTMOUTH, TEIGNMOUTH, TOPSHAM)
-  Dorset
-  Channel Islands
-  Bristol



Map 3 S.W. England and Channel Islands



The West Country merchants retained their control over the fishery for generations, providing the capital and organization so vital to the trade. As the years brought different conditions to bear on the fishery the merchants allowed their organizational patterns to take on different shapes and their capital was put into newer forms of the fishery. Beginning with the large inshore fishing vessels operating more or less independently, the merchants developed a more intricate system and by 1775 the merchants who were still involved in the actual fishing were operating by-boats and bankers, as well as cargo ships, besides supplying some of the local fishermen. During the American War the closure of the markets during 1778 and 1779 compounded the difficulties of finding men to work in the fishery and the rising general risks, forcing many men to suspend business in Newfoundland. Those who remained in the trade turned very heavily to the supply trade, investing considerable sums in the acquisition and transportation of large stocks of provisions and supplies. Increasingly the principals remained in England to supervise affairs there, employing agents to handle their affairs in Newfoundland, especially the staffing and management of additional premises from which to deal in supplies with the local fishermen. At the end of the American War the merchants resumed fishing on their own accounts, but continued to deal with the resident fishermen. This continued until the crash of 1789 after which the merchants essentially, although slowly, abandoned the migratory fishery in favour of supplying the local fishermen. The outbreak of war with France in 1793 confirmed this pattern and by the time peace was temporarily

restored in 1802, the whole structure of the island's population and its commerce were geared to an almost exclusively residential fishery.

The West Country Merchants of the late 18th Century - Their Identity.

— One way of discerning just who were the merchants in the Newfoundland trade in the years soon after the end of the American War is to examine the list of the 'most powerful traders' in Newfoundland as given by the Naval Officer around 1785.⁶ The list identifies the names and ports of origin of the larger mercantile houses and the various places in Newfoundland where they operated.⁷

Thus, as Matthews has noted,

forty-five merchants between them supplied perhaps 15,000 inhabitants and kept many bank ships for their own account (besides supplying many of the migratory by-boat men and 'taking off' their fish at the end of the season). These were the most powerful men in Newfoundland, the largest owned fortunes exceeding £200,000, and the greatest men of all, Arthur Holdsworth of Dartmouth, and Benjamin Lester, John Jeffreys, and George Garland of Poole, sat in the House of Commons as Members of Parliament of their boroughs. When the Government or the House of Commons wished for information, or to make changes in Newfoundland law, these men were used as the natural leaders in the fishery.⁸

⁶B.T. 6/87.84. A. Buchanan; Principal Fishing Settlements, 1785.

⁷See Table 13, p. 42,

⁸K. Matthews, The West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, p. 5.

TABLE 13

The 'Most Powerful Traders in Newfoundland' 1785⁹

<u>Marchant Firms</u>	<u>Ports of Origin</u>	<u>Locations in Newfoundland</u>
Noble and Pinson	Bristol/Dartmouth	Labrador
John Slade	Poole	Twillingate
Benjamin Lester	Poole	Fogo, Bonavista & Trinity Bays
Jeffrey and Street	Poole	Fogo, Bonavista & Trinity Bays.
Morrison	Greenock	Trinity Bay
J. and Young Green	Poole	Conception Bay
Mr. Pike	Poole	Conception Bay
Mr. Danson	Bristol	Conception Bay
Geo. Thomey	Bristol	Conception Bay
Mr. Clements	Bristol	Conception Bay
Newman and Roope	Dartmouth	Conception Bay & St. John's
Robert Newman and Co.	Dartmouth	St. John's & Little St. Law.
Sparke, Hutchings, Sparke	Dartmouth	St. John's
Arthur French	Dartmouth	St. John's
Mr. Geaves	Dartmouth	St. John's
Thomas and Stokes	Dartmouth	St. John's
Henley and Farley	Newton Abbott	St. John's
Mr. Gaden	Poole	St. John's
Mr. Teague	Dartmouth	Bay Bulls
Peter Ougier	Dartmouth	Bay Bulls
Brooks Family	Topsham	Bay Bulls
John Lloyd	Topsham	Bay Bulls
Robert Holdsworth	Dartmouth	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Arthur Holdsworth	Dartmouth	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Henry Studdy	Dartmouth	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Philip Leigh	Dartmouth	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Drew and Griffin	Dartmouth	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Peter Whitbourne	Teignmouth	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Scott and Co.	Cork	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Hill and Sweetland	London	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Tyler	London	Ferryland/Renews/Fermeuse
Follette	Topsham	Trepassey
Jackson	Topsham	Trepassey
Pennell	Topsham	Trepassey
Mr. Spurrier	Poole	St. Mary's
Penny and Frampton	Poole	St. Mary's
Nathan Tory	Poole	St. Mary's
Mr. Keates	Poole	St. Mary's
Mr. Saunders	Poole	Placentia/Paradise
Jos. and Moses Neave	Poole	Placentia/Paradise
Samuel Spratt	Poole	Great St. Lawrence
Maldren and Young	Poole	Oderin/Burin/Mortier/Fort. Bay
a small employer	Jersey	Great St. Lawrence
Robert Tremlett	Dartmouth	Fortune Bay

⁹B.T. 6/87.84 A. Buchanan, 'Principal Fishing Settlements, 1785.

From the list, it can be seen that men from various parts of England still controlled various parts of the Newfoundland coast. The merchants of Poole divided into two main groups. Jeffrey and Street, John Slade and Benjamin Lester controlled every branch of the fishery from Trinity Bay northwards, and a more numerous group, Spurrier, Penny and Frampton, Tory, Keats, Saunders, the Neaves, Waldren and Young and Spratt monopolised the trade of St. Mary's and Placentia Bays to the south. Two other Poole houses, Pike and Green were by far the most important in Carbonear. All but one of the Bristol traders were centred around Harbour Grace. This was John Noble who was paired up with Andrew Pinson of Dartmouth to form the most important house in Labrador. Most of the South Devon Traders were concentrated along the coast between St. John's and Trepassey, although Newman and Roope of Dartmouth had important interests in Port de Grave. At St. John's, the largest of the Dartmouth houses dominated, but at Bay Bulls, Cape Broyle and Trepassey Topsham firms were predominant. Ferryland, Renew's and Fermeuse were 'outports' of Teignmouth and Dartmouth. The newly developing South Coast was also becoming the reserve of the Dartmouth houses of Robert Newman and Thomas Tremlett.⁹

From the list of the 'most powerful traders in Newfoundland as given by Buchanan in 1785, it can be seen that the ports of Dartmouth and Poole dominated the trade almost completely. Together they made up about two-thirds of the merchants mentioned, with lesser numbers coming

⁹ Ibid., pp. 5-6

from other ports, Bristol (4), Newton Abbot (1), Topsham (5), Teignmouth (1) and non-West Country ports together (5). Of this whole group two firms stood out as the very largest. These were the Poole firms of Benjamin Lester and Jeffrey and Street. These two firms had establishments in similar areas, Fogo and Twillingate, in Trinity, and in Bonavista Bay. Jeffrey and Street annually exported about 50,000 quintals¹¹ and Benjamin Lester annually shipped off somewhat more, about 60,000 quintals.¹² In the mid-1780's Jeffrey and Street were supplying over 3,000 people, and Benjamin Lester and Company were doing much the same. The two firms, similar in many ways, had, however, come into existence in different ways. Benjamin Lester had begun as an agent for an earlier firm, that of Masters and Ballard,¹³ while Jeffrey and Street (together with a temporary partner named Randle) had entered the trade employing capital acquired as one-third heirs of Joseph and Samuel White, early merchants in Newfoundland trade.¹⁴ By the 1790's the firm

¹¹ See Jeffrey and Street Name Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹² See Lester Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹³ K. Matthews, The West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, p. 8.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 7. Also Jeffrey, Street and Randle Name Files in the Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

of Benjamin Lester and Company seem to have further out-distanced even Jeffrey and Street, their closest competitors, if the size of their shipping fleet is any indication.¹⁵

Small only in comparison to these two giants of the trade were about half a dozen other firms, again all from either Poole or Dartmouth. From Poole were the Slades, the Spurriers, Saunders and Clarke and Waldron. From Dartmouth were the firms of the Holdsworth and Newman families, Arthur Holdsworth and Company, Robert Holdsworth and Company, Robert Newman and Company, and Newman and Roope. Of great influence and importance in the Newfoundland trade and in the West Country, these men operated fishing establishments, contracted for labour, functioned as ship-owners, and annually¹⁶ exported up to half the amounts shipped by the two largest firms.

Some of the firms had been involved with the fishery for generations; but newer to the trade were many others who worked their way up through the ranks, beginning as ships' captains, as agents for others, etc. Of the two giants of the trade, Lester's family had been connected with the trade since roughly 1715, whereas Jeffrey and Street had only entered the trade at the beginning of the American War. The very earliest in the trade were the Newman and Roope families of Dartmouth who had both been dealing with Newfoundland before the

¹⁵ In 1794 Jeffrey appears to have 6 ships while Lester has 20. Lloyds Register of Shipping, 1794. See Introduction, page ix, for cautionary note.

¹⁶ Newman's ship anywhere up to 25,000 qtls. a year. See Margaret Chang, "Robert Newman & Co., A Study in the Newfoundland Trade", Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972, Table V, p. 43.

beginning of the seventeenth century. The following table will indicate the dates of many West Country firms entering the Newfoundland trade.

TABLE 14

West-Country Merchants

Dates of entry into the Newfoundland Trade¹⁷

1565	Newman	1760's	Neave
1600	Roope	1760's	French
1636	Young	1760's	Penney
1650	Holdsworth	1770	Farley
1673	Pike	1773	Thomey
1680's	Jacksons	1775	Ougier
1700	Clarke	1775	Teage
1714	Green	1775	Danson
1715	Lester, Francis	1776	Jeffrey
1720's	Spurrier	1776	Street
1720's	Follett	1776	Frampton
1720's	Brooks	1776	Hill
1750's	Pinson	1776	Henley
1750's	Lloyd	1777	Pennell
1750's	Slade	1778	Stokes
1750's	Sweetland	1779	Saunders
1750's	Thomas	1779	Maldron
1750's	Tremlett	1779	Drew
1760's	Noble	1779	Hutchings
1760's	Leigh	1780's	Spratt
1760's	Geaves	1780's	Griffin
1760's	Sparke		

Throughout their long history in the Newfoundland trade, the majority of the West Country mercantile fishing firms were marked by several discernible characteristics, the clearest one being perhaps the

¹⁷K. Matthews, West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, pp. 6-7.

maintenance of a primary and direct interest in the fishery, either through direct fishing, or as the migratory fishery declined, through their involvement with the local fishermen. Always, the fishery itself was of immediate concern to the West Country firms.

For the West Country firms in the Newfoundland trade, their participation was a matter of tradition. For generations West Country families had provided capital and labour for the far-away fishery. The fortunes of a family were often to be measured in their performance of the various occupations necessary to the trade, common fishermen, skilled tradesmen, ships' captains and sailors, and the all-important merchant. The fortunate rose from the ranks below, and the unfortunate sank back down into the ranks. A very few rose to become merchants and used the wealth and position thus created to enter professional life or other trades.¹⁸ The West Country firms in Newfoundland were, of course, of all sizes and lasted for varying lengths of time. However, it remained a characteristic of the trade until late in the eighteenth century that the largest firms in the trade were usually from the West Country. As the traditional masters of the fishery for generations this was perhaps natural.

¹⁸ K. Matthews, West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, pp. 10-12. Also Name Files of Jackson, Pennell, Jeffrey and Street, and Newmans, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

Non-West Country Firms in the Newfoundland Trade

The dominance which the West Country firms enjoyed until near the end of the eighteenth century did not, of course, go unchallenged, particularly when conditions in the fishery were prosperous, attracting not only new participants from the West Country ports but from other ports as well. By the last years of the seventeenth century, merchants from London had become prominent in the trade. However, to them the Newfoundland trade was only one of many, and their interest was in commerce generally, and not in the fishery itself. In fact these men maintained close ties with the West Country, their ships often sailed from these ports, and were skippered by West Country captains. As the eighteenth century progressed a general depression hit the Newfoundland trade, and merchants from London and also from Bristol lost interest in it, and turned to other areas. The West Country firms were left to be masters of a trade that no one else wanted. This continued until prosperity returned after 1763, by which time they were solidly entrenched in the trade. Thus, in the immediate post-American War period, the list of the most powerful traders in Newfoundland lists only 5 non-West Country firms, two Londoners, a Jerseyman, an Irishman, and most ominously, as it turned out, a Scot.

Before the outbreak of the American War in 1775, efforts by non-West Country firms had met with only indifferent success. Early in

*See Table 13, p. 42.

the eighteenth century some Scottish merchants had tried to enter the Newfoundland trade, to the immediate consternation of the English merchants.

The Scottish are lately in the trade, they work for little wages, and Scottish prices are cheap... for they will undersell us.²⁰

But the Scottish seem to have abandoned their efforts in the Newfoundland trade after this until some time after the Seven Years' War.

Other merchants who had shown an early interest in the Newfoundland fishery had been in those Irish ports of call normally used by the West Country merchants on their way to Newfoundland. There was, of course, a long tradition of contact between Newfoundland and Ireland, but it had been under the control mainly of the West Country fishing merchants. In the early 1760's some Irish merchants attempted to export coarse woollens, shoes, candles, and soap to Newfoundland,²¹ (which were then prohibited) aimed particularly at the Irish labourers employed in the fishery by the West Countrymen. This was quickly taxed²² and the export trade ended.

During the years of the eighteenth century, West Country firms had come to rely on Irish labour to supplement their own crews, and to

²⁰C.O.194. 3/89. Oct. 15, 1705.

²¹C.O.325/7.130. First Report of the Committee to enquire into the trade of Newfoundland William Newman's evidence.

²²ibid.

provide servants for the planters. Over the years these Irishmen had slowly become integrated into all aspects of the trade, the vast majority remaining migratory merchants, some becoming permanently resident as fishermen or planters, and some acting in the manner of traditional fishing merchants, exchanging at their stores provisions and equipment for fish. During these last years of the century they seem to have been relatively successful and men like Eustace, Meagher, Sweetman and Morris, all of Waterford, and Ryan and Keough of Ross became prominent figures in the trade.²³ As prosperity pervaded the fishery and as the population grew, opportunities arose for skilled tradesmen, Irish among them, to do well in Newfoundland, their affairs increasing in importance until they operated small general stores handling a wide variety of merchandise.

However, the prosperity after the Seven Years' War period and the changing conditions brought on by the American War of 1775-1783 and the years immediately thereafter, permitted outsiders to penetrate the Newfoundland trade much more successfully and to break the exclusive hold of the West Country men on the trade. After the Treaty of Paris, Scotland revived its interest in the Newfoundland trade. Scottish exports to Newfoundland resumed after 1763 and became annual, if somewhat irregular, in scope. See the following table.

²³ See their respective Name Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

TABLE 15
Scottish Exports to Newfoundland, 1755-1801²⁴

Year	Value			Year	Value		
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
1755				1779	6,609	8	3
1756				1780	12,206	0	2
1757				1781	17,836	4	11
1758				1782	14,650	3	6
1759				1783	10,691	8	10
1760				1784	8,436	19	11
1761				1785	10,909	14	11
1762				1786	13,783	13	5
1763				1787	12,923	11	5
1764	340	8	10	1788	11,593	0	11
1765	2,453	8	10	1789	11,620	2	7
1766	1,356	3	11	1790	11,990	16	4
1767	1,084	19	8	1791	13,960	1	2
1768	796	4	9	1792	18,276	11	9
1769	961	10	11	1793	23,262	3	3
1770	187	5	8	1794	20,019	12	4
1771	706	18	0	1795	18,497	17	3
1772	1,955	1	6	1796	24,108	9	9
1773	1,357	18	10	1797	13,745	3	3
1774	2,075	6	10	1798	27,682	13	8
1775	4,053	17	6	1799	19,079	15	1
1776	17,564	1	9	1800	23,291	1	5
1777	9,749	13	5	1801	46,883	4	8
1778	14,076	10	6				

From the ports of Ayr, Irving, Glasgow and increasingly from Greenock, Scottish merchants organized their trade to Newfoundland. After very low shipments during 1770 and 1771 the Scottish continued their efforts, and the value of their exports to Newfoundland climbed steadily. With the outbreak of the American War supplies from America were cut off and Scottish exports increased tremendously, (£17,564 in 1776 over £4,053 in 1775). In spite of fluctuations, the export totals

²⁴BT 6/191.

remained considerable, as they did for the rest of the century.

Around the time of the American War Scottish activities in Newfoundland met with considerable success. William Morison of Glasgow entered the trade at the beginning of the American War, and although he never developed on a scale comparable with the larger West Country firms, he was a Scottish pioneer and lasted until some time after 1785.²⁵

Other firms which entered the Newfoundland trade about the time of the American War were Thomson, Hunter, Crawford and Stevenson, and Robertson and Thomson, all of whom became prominent in the trade.²⁶ Not all of the Scottish merchants survived during this period, of course, and the less capable and less fortunate dropped out soon after their entry. Most of the new Scottish firms centered on St. John's, there being a larger population and greater diversity, as well as less restriction of dealers to a particular merchant.²⁷

During the 1790's Scottish trade to the Island grew and by the time of the war with France it had begun to rise again.

²⁵ He was on the 1785 list of merchants given by Buchanan. He is listed by Matthews as one of the earlier Scottish merchants, see K. Matthews, West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, p. 7. Other information in Morison Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

²⁶ See their respective Name Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

²⁷ K. Matthews, History of the West of England - Newfoundland Fishery, pp. 425, 491.

Throughout the war period the Scottish trade experienced considerable fluctuations, quite naturally, often depending upon the fortunes of war, but on the whole their exports to Newfoundland experienced considerable increase, reaching a peak value for many years in 1801 of £46,883.²⁸

Other merchants managed to penetrate the exclusive hold of the West Country merchants at Newfoundland, among them merchants based in Canada and the West Indies, upon whom the Island had depended for help with provisioning during the years of the American War. The stimulation of contacts with these two places led to their greater interest in Newfoundland. With a successful trade developing between Newfoundland and Canada, and between Newfoundland and the West Indies during the Napoleonic War, merchants whose primary interest was with either the Canadian or the West Indian trade established a toe-hold and eventually became intimately connected with Newfoundland. Many of these were Scottish men who had entered these other trades first and then entered the Newfoundland trade. Others were mainly of West Indian and Bermuda stock and these too entered the Newfoundland supply trade, sending supplies on speculation or as consignments for the West Countrymen.²⁹ Yet again, a few permanently resident Newfoundland merchants developed an interest in the trade from Newfoundland to Canada or the West Indies and they operated ships in the trade carrying the produce of one area

²⁸ See Table 15, p. 51.

²⁹ K. Matthews, History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p. 424.

to the other.³⁰ The merchants from these 'auxilliary' trades almost invariably set up houses and agents in Newfoundland, and as their trades prospered and developed they became permanent attachments in Newfoundland, most often at St. John's. Together they began to provide the West Country firms with serious competition.

How did these outside merchants manage to penetrate the fishery so thoroughly this time, more so than ever before? Part of the answer lies in the conditions in their home ports, growing capital, growing populations, developing manufactures. To this was added a desire to partake of the profits that could be reaped while the Newfoundland trade was enjoying prosperity. However, by the late eighteenth century, factors other than these permitted the West Country firms to be seriously challenged by 'outsiders'. There had always been a turnover of merchant firms in the trade but these had all entered from within the context of the direct fishery which, of course, had been migratory. The West Countrymen had been traditionally interested mainly in the migratory fishery and here they displayed their advantages - a monopoly of the best fishermen and the best fishing rooms, as well as the experience needed to manage the fishery in its entirety. By now, however, the Newfoundland fishery was moving in the direction of a residential fishery. A residential fishery meant the fishermen were stationary, located at their own rooms, and susceptible to being bound to whichever merchant might best guarantee his supplies and equipment. In the business of providing

³⁰ Examples of such are the Gills and Nathaniel Phillips. See their respective Name Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

supplies, the West Country merchants could have no monopoly, and anyone with sufficient capital could acquire fish if he could bring in large stocks of supplies. In effect, it was now possible to become involved in the fish-export trade without knowing too much about the fishery itself. The growing population which was permanently bound to Newfoundland meant that one could be just a dealer, not necessarily a fishing merchant. In most cases the men in the markets who handled the sales of fish for the West Country merchants would and did handle sales for the other newer merchants.³¹

In distinction from the West Country merchants these newer merchants, Scottish, West Indian and Canadian, who managed to penetrate the Newfoundland trade were or had been 'outsiders' with no traditional connection with the fishery or Newfoundland. For the first time there were substantial men in the trade who had put in no long period of apprenticeship learning the trade. For once Newfoundland was not the centre of the firm's interest, or if it was, it became so only over time. For many of these men, it was a matter of having vessels going with goods to Canada and the West Indies anyway. Newfoundland's needs for supplies during the American War had shown them a way to make additional use of such vessels with very little extra trouble.

Very few of these men had a primary interest in the fishery itself. They tended to concentrate in St. John's, the commercial centre

³¹Hunt, Roope and Company Letter Book, Oporto, 1793-4. On Sept. 14, 1793, they sent state-of-the-market reports to merchants like Stewart and Rennie, as well as to Lester, Jeffrey and Street, etc. Newman Book No. 26/45, Reel E11.

of the island, and from there they distributed supplies in return for fish, some not even supplying particular dealers for any length of time. Some of them peddled their goods in the outports, much to the displeasure of the West Country men who controlled various harbours, and the dealers in them.³² The collected fish was either disposed of in St. John's to market-bound vessels or taken to market on their own vessels. They were concerned almost exclusively with the produce of the fishery, while the West Country men remained more concerned with the actual fishing through the supplying of the individual fishermen.

A number of these firms became of considerable size, but for some time to come they did not become larger than any of the largest West Country firms. However, a number of the largest of the West Country firms were by now losing some of their interest in the fishery, much of their money going to the development of other trades, such as ones in the market areas;³³ or in the English trade.

Besides the merchant firms which dealt directly or indirectly with the fishery, there proliferated in places like St. John's commercial establishments of a different type. Like all activity in Newfoundland, they were essentially based upon the fishery, but their contact with the

³² Robert Newman and Company letter to the Newfoundland agent, Feb. 28, 1796. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

³³ The Newman/Hunt/Roope complex turned increasingly to the Portuguese wine trade. The Jackmans and Folletts turned to the English trade. The heirs of Jeffrey and Street turned to the Iberian trade. See the Name Files of these firms, Maritime History, Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

fishery was fairly remote. These were the huxter's shops, a term still familiar in Newfoundland today, a place which a roving peddler might call home. Here goods of all kinds were available, as well as beverages to be consumed. Many of these establishments were run by Irishmen of some substance, and much of their business was aimed at the Irish labourers in the fishery, as well as, of course, at the rest of the labouring and common fishermen. In return for goods and liquor available from the huxter, the customer kept a running account which was finally totalled off by turning over to the huxter the bills of exchange with which he had been paid. There were complaints that some of the huxters profited too well from the transactions undertaken, forcing the Island to support destitute fishermen who had been left penniless by the huxter.³⁴ The number of huxter shops in St. John's seems to have increased substantially,³⁵ so presumably the business was a good one, and worked many Irishmen into the comfortable circumstances on which their West Country neighbours speculated.³⁶ Shops of a different sort, also superimposed on the fishery, were the public houses, or taverns.

³⁴C.O.325/7.158. Second Report of the Committee to enquire into the trade of Newfoundland, p. 15. Major Elford testified at the 1793 Enquiry that huxters defrauded the Irish servants and left them in the Island. Reports of the Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the trade to Newfoundland, 1793.

³⁵C.O.325/7.143. First Report of the Committee to enquire into the trade of Newfoundland, p. 47. Ougler testified at the 1793 Enquiry that he could 'remember' when there was only one huxter shop.

³⁶Extracts from the Report of the Select Committee on the Trade and Settlement of Newfoundland, 1817, p. 13, (available at Maritime History Archives, Memorial University, St. John's, File No.

Once the preserve of Englishmen, they became an Irish specialty and the numbers of public houses proliferated, more and more of them being operated by the Irish. See the following List of Public Houses for 1797/98 and 1807/08; p. 59.

These huxter shops and taverns only indicate part of the growing diversity of occupations which were open to those residing in Newfoundland. No longer was the fishery the only employer. By the 1790's St. John's boasted a wide variety of services and trades. Public business was attended to by a Justice of the Peace, a Parish Clerk, a Customs Collector and a High Constable. Health matters were supervised by a midwife, a nurse, several doctors and a surgeon. Spiritual and educational matters were attended to by the different Clergymen and by school masters and a school mistress. The town also provided the services of tailors, washerwomen and laundress ladies, a scrivener, a shoemaker, several butchers, barbers and a baker. A watchmaker, a glazier, a mason, a farmer and an armourer all made their homes in the port as well as a number of coopers, smiths, carpenters, two gardeners, and one auctioneer.³⁷

All of these were tradesmen (and women) who might or might not, have had any former connection directly with the fishery. They existed as a sort of superstructure on the fishery. However, their activities of course were ultimately connected with the fishery and any changes in

³⁷ 1794-1795 Census of St. John's, Gosling Memorial Library, St. John's.

TABLE 16

Public Houses in St. John's, 1797/8 and 1807/8

<u>1797/8</u> <u>Owners</u>	<u>Owners</u>	<u>1807/8</u> <u>Name of Tavern</u>
Michael Little	Robert Parsons	West India Coffee House
John Cox	William Best	Bunch of Grapes
John Bolan	John Biddicome	Rose and Crown
Sarah Martin	James Hayse	Ship
John Cahill	Edward Angell	Britannia
William Power	John Williams	Nelson
Patrick Flannery	John Cahill	Tavern for all Weathers
Augustus McNamara	Patrick Murine	Flower Pot
William McCarthy	William McCarthy	Hope
William Welsh	Richard Heaney	Struggler
Patrick McDonald	Michael Murphy	Dove
Andrew St. John	Mary Hennessey	Royal Standard
Peter Lyons	Patrick Redmond	Ship Assistance
Michael Maher	William Power	Angel
James Maher	Angus MacNamara	Agincourt
John Flood	William Welsh	Swan
John Brophy	Robert Dooling	Red Cow
John Widdicomb	John Fitzgerald	Jolly Fisherman
Edmond Doyle	Edmond Doyle	Blue Ball
Michael Hanlon	Michael Hanlon	Shoulder of Mutton
Patrick Redmond	Dominic King	White Hart
John Power	Graham Little	
Thomas Murphy	Richard Perchard	Royal Oak
William Prendergast	Margaret Walsh	Sailor
Dominic King	Cornelius Quirk	London Tavern
George Shepherd	Dennis Murphy	Wheatsheaf
David Power	Daniel Driscoll	Bird-in-Hand
Michael Welsh	Patrick Walsh	Union Flag
John Nevean	Robert Brine	Butchery and at Pringle's Farm
Philip Harrahan	William Welsh	
Daniel Delaney	Michael Mara	Sun
Mark Codey	John Murphy	Duke of York
Michael Welsh	Thomas Murphy	Three Crowns
	Charles Power	Plough at Brine's Bridge

the fortunes of the fishery would also affect them. They were generally small men, exchanging services, or provisions, goods and liquor for bills of exchange or even fish. It is to be suspected that some of them gradually accumulated money from their small businesses and rose to become small merchants in the fishery. The huxters and tavern owners, together with the growing numbers of tradesmen, agents, and clerks began to form a unique thing in Newfoundland society, a middle class between the common fishermen and the larger merchants.

Immediately after the American War ended the West Country firms were still the backbone of the Newfoundland economy. The larger firms were accused by government officials³⁹ of being monopolistic, and were envied by smaller and newer operators.⁴⁰ Yet by the early nineteenth century, a combination of wartime hostilities, a changing economy, and new and vigorous competition had made great inroads into their preserve. By 1800 many of the firms on Buchanan's list of "the most powerful traders at Newfoundland" had been forced to reduce their size and scope, or had ceased to participate in the Newfoundland trade at all. The following list will reveal when many of the firms which had long been important dealers finally left the Newfoundland trade. (It must be realized, of course, that other West Country men continued to enter the trade, operating in the fashion of the other new entrants. Beginning on a very small scale, some of them would come to prominence during the nineteenth century.)⁴¹

³⁹B.T. 5/7.184. Board of Trade Inquiry. Graham's Evidence.

⁴⁰B.T. 5/2.52. Board of Trade Inquiry. Hutchings' Evidence.

⁴¹See the Name Files for Elson, Sweetland, Morry, Bully, Job, Noble and Whitway, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

TABLE 17

When "The Most Important Traders in Newfoundland" (1785)⁴²

Withdrawn From the Trade

<u>Traders</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Noble and Pinson John Slade Ben Lester	Continued into 19th century Survived and expanded till 1869. Died in 1792, property went to son-in-law Garland.
Jeffrey and Street Morrison J. & Young Green	Died some time after 1785. Left some time after 1785. Greens died out 1788/90. Youngs went out soon after 1780's.
William Pike William Danson George Thomey William Clements	Went out after 1790's. Survived till 1832. Went bankrupt around 1791. Survived into the 1800's - never very important.
Newman and Roope Robert Newman and Company Sparke, Hutchings and Sparke Arthur French William Geaves	Lost interest after 1790's. Lasted till 1890's. Went out after 1790, badly hit financially. Was dead by 1790, connection ended. Probably died around 1795. Never heard of after.
Thomas and Stokes Henley and Farley William Gaden Peter Ougier William Teague Brooks family John Lloyd Robert Holdsworth Arthur Holdsworth	Went bankrupt and sold out around 1799. Went bankrupt in 1798, sold to Scots. Insolvent 1790. Withdrawn around 1790. Disappeared around 1800. Had gone bankrupt by 1800. Was gone by 1790. Lost interest by 1790. Arthur died, heirs lost interest, sold out by 1838.
Henry Studdy Philip Leigh	Disappeared by 1800. Went bankrupt by 1800.

⁴²See Table 18, p. 42, for the list as given by Buchanan in 1785. The withdrawal information is from K. Matthews, The West Country Merchants in Newfoundland, pp. 10-12.

TABLE 17 (Continued)

When "The Most Important Traders in Newfoundland" (1785)

Withdrew From the Trade

<u>Traders</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Drew and Griffin	Probably went bankrupt by 1800.
Peter Whitbourne	Withdrew by 1788.
Scott and Company	Withdrew from bad trade by 1800.
Hill and Sweetland	Sweetland sold out around 1789.
Tyler	Withdrew by 1788.
Follett	Withdrew to concentrate on English trade by the mid 1790's.
Jackson	After 1806 turned to English trade and professions.
Pennell	Turned to other affairs.
William Spurrier	Expanded till 1829, then went bankrupt.
Penny and Frampton	Frampton went out by 1796, Penny's lasted till 1820's, then went out.
Nathan Tory	Insolvent, 1790.
William Keates	Insolvent, 1790.
William Saunders	Combined with Sweetman of Poole.
Joseph and Moses Neave	Survived till end of Napoleonic Wars. Lasted till 1820, left, probably financially hit.
Samuel Spratt	Died in 1780's, no successor.
Waldron and Young	Youngs died out after the 1780's, property taken over by Spurrier.
Robert Tremlett	Insolvent 1799.

Of the two largest firms, that of Benjamin Lester and Company survived the period best, and continued on into the new century. When Benjamin himself died in 1802 the firm was run by his brother, Sir John Lester and a partner, George Garland. By 1806 the firm changed name and

⁸² See Lester Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

became George Garland and Company, under which name it continued to operate in the Newfoundland trade for years. The firm of Jeffrey and Street did survive until 1800, but with diminishing vitality, being forced to reduce as the Revolutionary War with France continued. The firm finally sold out to Slades of Trinity in 1806.⁴⁴

Many other West Country firms declined or disappeared altogether. From Carbonear to Renews conditions did not seem to favour the old-time merchants. On the Southern Shore, Peter Ougier and the Holdsworths remained but both of these were forced to reduce. Ougier continued on at Bay Bulls until 1804 when he committed suicide, presumably because business was so bad.⁴⁵ The Holdsworth family, formerly a large concern at Ferryland, was drastically reduced, and by 1806 the Holdsworths at Ferryland (formerly two separate operations under Robert and Arthur) combined to form Henry Holdsworth and Company.⁴⁶ A small merchant, Jackson of Topsham, remained a resident dealer until 1816 when he also went bankrupt.⁴⁷ John Hill at Cape Broyle finally went out of business as well, and was bought up by Sweetland. He returned to the trade, finally going bankrupt in 1815.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ See Jeffrey, Street and Slade Name Files in Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁴⁵ See Ougier Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁴⁶ See Holdsworth Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁴⁷ See Jackson Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University.

⁴⁸ See Hill and Sweetland Name Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

In St. John's itself, many of the older merchants were overrun by the newcomers who tended to concentrate in the capital. Eppes and Gaden remained a big firm there, but old Gaden had gone bankrupt and this was a newly reorganized partnership.⁴⁹ Robert Newman had managed to remain at St. John's without going bankrupt. However, although they maintained a bill and cash business there with dealers and other merchants, Newman's became less and less fish suppliers in St. John's.⁵⁰ Arthur French was lost in 1787 on the return trip to England, and his business was wound up by 1788.⁵¹ In Conception Bay only two firms of the old list remained in 1803, these being Newman and Roope,⁵² and Danson.⁵³ Thus, many of the smaller outport firms did not survive.

The surviving West Country firms of the old style seem to have been mainly in the large and expanding outport areas, where there was good fishing combined with expanding populations.⁵⁴ Such areas included

⁴⁹ See Gaden Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁵⁰ By now they were pulling out of St. John's to concentrate on their South Coast operations.

⁵¹ See French Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁵² See Newman and Roope Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁵³ See Danson Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

⁵⁴ The following discussion is based on the material contained in the Name Files of these various families, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

Trinity and Bonavista Bays, Fogo and Twillingate, the Labrador coast and the South Coast. Benjamin Lester and Company and Jeffrey and Street, the two giants of the trade, did well for most of the period in Trinity and Bonavista Bays, and at Fogo and Twillingate. Jeffrey and Street experienced great losses during the war, and by 1806 were much reduced. Both of them were also involved along the Labrador coast as were the firms of Noble and Pinson and the Slades (who also had premises at Twillingate). Robert Newman and Company beginning in 1784, increasingly shifted its business interests to various places on the South Coast, and they continued to survive well into the next century.⁵⁵ At St. Mary's the Spurriers remained, outlasting the Torys, Penny and Frampton, and William Keates. At Placentia and Paradise Saunders and Sweetman increased considerably until 1789, after which they entered a decline. Neave continued to operate at Petit Placentia, while at St. Lawrence, although Spratt died and Tremlett went out of business, other firms in the area continued to flourish.⁵⁶

In this chapter an attempt has been made to examine the merchant community. An examination of the most powerful traders in 1785 revealed that the West Country firms dominated the island's fishery. However, other firms had begun to break into the trade, and other trades and

⁵⁵ They gradually withdrew in the last years of the nineteenth century. See their letter books throughout the period.

⁵⁶ This discussion is also based on the Name Files of the firms mentioned, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

services proliferated on the island as the fishery grew increasingly residential. By 1800 many of the old style West Country firms had reduced or gone out of business. A few (mostly in the outports), were fortunate enough to hold their own in the more competitive community. Only three West Country firms, Lester and Garland, Slade, and Robert Newman and Company, seem to have managed not only to maintain themselves but to increase their importance in the trade.

CHAPTER III

HAZARDS OF THE TRADE

For all concerned, but especially for the merchant firms, the Newfoundland trade was one of great hazards. The basic uncertainties were the natural hazards, about which very little could be done. The greatest of these was the uncertainty of the appearance of fish along the part of the coast in which the merchant was interested. In such cases, the merchant might try his luck somewhat further along the coast, but there was a limit to how far his boats and crews would range from their basic area.¹ Other hazards included the scarcity of bait fish, in which case they might try to get bait from elsewhere, or might try less common forms of bait, such as cod roes, etc.² The occurrence of bad weather restricted the amount of fishing which could be done³ and prevented the

¹For example, see the letter from Robert Newman and Company to their agent at St. Lawrence, William Holcott, September 5, 1795, "... dismal accounts of the fishery ... It is not easy to account for the fish moving from place to place but if the fish continues to the Westward of you and Fortune Bay this summer ... You on the spot must know best and regulate your plans accordingly ... but we think if it falls at Cape and Burin that 2 or 3 boats enough, to pursue bad luck." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²A letter from Robert Newman and Company, 1812 as cited in C.R. Fay, Life and Labour in Newfoundland (1966, University of Toronto Press), p. 20.

³For example, see the letter from Robert Newman and Company to their agent John Thorn, May 15, 1805 "... expect from the severity of the winter you have done little fishing ..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

proper curing of fish already taken.⁴ It created additional navigational hazards in the form of storms, ice, or fog,⁵ which added to the general sea risk as well as detaining the loading of ships and their departure for the markets.⁶

The scarcity of fish that prevailed unexpectedly and unpredictably during some seasons proved to be a serious occurrence. When the amount of fish was scarce, what fish was caught brought a good price in Newfoundland, which was to the merchant's disadvantage,⁷ but usually could be expected to bring a good price in the markets, which was to the merchant's advantage. However, should anything happen to the cargo on the way to market, or should the markets suddenly prove to be

⁴ See for example the letter from Robert Newman and Company to Newman and Land, Oporto, Oct. 30, 1797, "If the Good Intent's cargo is unsold we desire you will get clear of it on the best terms you can, for this reason we hear in Newfoundland the weather hath been very bad for curing fish [and] the scarcity of salt such in all probability the fish hath not a proper quality and of course will not keep..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁵ See for example the letter from Robert Newman and Company to Mr. Bell, April 12, 1805 "expect the navigation will not be very favorable as our last advise from the Western part of Newfoundland speaks of the winter being more severe than for 20 years past ..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

⁶ See for example the letter from Robert Newman and Company to Capt. Livingstone, Portsmouth, Aug. 8th, 1798 "It is our interest to dispatch the fish with every dispatch but it can't be done in wet weather." Also a letter to John Fowles, July 23, 1805 "the weather in Newfoundland was likely to detain her for so long ..." Also a letter to William Bennett and Company, Oct. 20th, 1806 "We believe bad weather in Newfoundland will delay the early ships sailing". Newman Books Nos. 22/38, Reel E9 and 23/39, Reel E10.

⁷ The cargo alone might be plundered, thrown overboard, improperly supervised, too long detained, over-heated, etc.

unreceptive, the merchant suffered greater losses than usual because of the higher cost of his cargo.

When fish was scarce the most obvious hardship for the fishermen, of course, was that many did not catch enough fish to pay for the supplies, equipment and food that they had already used. For the merchant, the fish sold at market might not be sufficient in quantity to recompense the merchant for what he had already invested. It is here, on the question of prices, that one can see perhaps most clearly the innate conflict of interest between the merchant and the actual catchers of fish. The fishermen's only concern was with the lowest possible price for his provisions and equipment and the highest price for fish when sold to the merchant at the end of the season in Newfoundland. The fisherman hired on wages would have very little interest in the price of fish, being only concerned with getting his wages with the least possible exertion. On the other hand, the merchant in Newfoundland needed to sell his supplies and goods as dearly as possible while giving as little as possible for the fish he received. Each tried in his own way to gain the advantage of the other. The merchants eventually began actively to cooperate with neighbouring merchants, arranging common prices, agreeing not to deal

with each others dealers, etc.⁸ On the other hand, the fishermen tried to pit one merchant against the other,⁹ pointing out discrepancies in prices and they eagerly sold to peddlars and traders who came to buy fish at better prices.¹⁰

As strange as it sounds, an over-abundance of fish could also cause a number of problems. With fish plentiful, prices tended to drop lower in Newfoundland, but also to drop lower in the market areas. Low prices in Newfoundland meant that the fisherman worked for less, while low prices in the market ports meant that the merchants had to deal in more fish to make the same returns. The best possible position for all concerned would be for fish to be plentiful in Newfoundland and for the

⁸ There are many instances of Newman's advocating inter-merchant co-operation. Examples include a letter to the agent William Mollcott, dated August 26, 1794, in which they advised Mollcott to supply any items needed by Mr. Mallett's agent and dealers. In another letter to J. Waldron of Poole on April 2, 1795 they suggested that they utilize shipping more effectively. Again in 1796 they wrote to the same Mr. Waldron of Poole (Feb. 23), suggesting price correlation, noting "... this is a suggestion of co-operation between both parties ... to take such steps as they may think for the interest of both parties". Co-operation was often the result of combining against outsiders, particularly peddlars. For example in the same letter to Waldron in 1796 they go on to say "... but by all means to prevent the fish from getting into their [Mr. Routh, an outsider] hands if he can ...". Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁹ The merchant firms were quite aware of this as can be seen in a letter from Robert Newman and Company to their agent, William Mollcott in May, 1805 "If you are invited to join in establishing the price for dealing we would have you strictly comply with any agreement you think right to enter into ... You may depend the planters would be glad to expose any deviation to the parties ..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

¹⁰ The merchant firms were particularly antagonistic towards these outsider encroachments upon people whom they supplied for fishing. Witness the following letter written to Robert Newman and Company's agent at Little Bay, James Langdon, on February 28, 1796 "[do] not let strangers come into

market prices to be sustained through additional demands being made on it for more and more fish. This was the situation which did arise after the end of the American War in 1783 when, long starved for fish, the markets absorbed increasing amounts of fish for a number of years. Since a saturation point was bound to occur, even this best of situations was fraught with danger.

Yet, with the handling of more cargoes of fish, the possibilities of damages and losses of some cargoes grew proportionately. With an abundance of fish there were stronger pressures on the merchant: it became more and more crucial to send fish of the best quality, and any deterioration along the way would be felt more than normally. The over-abundance of fish on the island pressured the merchant to get his fish to market at the most opportune time, and to arrange his cargoes to arrive in single shipments as early as possible.¹¹

An over-abundance of fish in Newfoundland accompanied by good markets brought on yet another difficulty. Several years of bountiful catches at good prices induced many more people to enter the fishery. A large number of new and inexperienced men participating in the fishery could cause great uncertainty, particularly when their actions as to

the Bay and take it [fish] from you ... Therefore sell goods for fish and oil cheap as they do ... this should only continue while they are in the Bay ... I would wish you to agree with these people [their dealers] as early as possible as I am of opinion you will have a peddler with you early ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

¹¹Single shipments were bound to bring greater profits, and in a letter to Vallin and Harrington at Naples, on May 1, 1796, Newman of Oporto, in discussing a shipment of fish which had been sold remarked "... it was unfortunate so much fish should arrive so soon after." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

supply or markets could not be estimated as could the activities of the more established merchants. This situation could lead very easily to over-production, a saturation of the markets, as a result of which prices would fall and disaster would overtake not only these newcomers, but also the more established merchants who were the mainstay of the trade. This same effect of saturation would occur of course if normal shipments for the whole range of market ports for some reason suddenly funnelled into a more limited area.

Besides these natural hazards which had to be viewed as 'an act of God', there were a multitude of hazards brought on by the activities of men. The chief of all such hazards was the outbreak of war between Britain and some of the other major nations.¹² Initially the wars affected shipping. The merchants suffered from the outright loss of their vessels and employees, both through sinkings and captures.¹³ When ships were not irrevocably lost, they cost their owners money, either because they had been damaged and plundered,¹⁴ or because they could be

¹²"Wars and what was even worse, rumors of wars, made things impossible for the men who had been brought up to rely on the regular annual voyage to St. John's in early March and a return laden with fish and oil at the close of the summer". P. Russell, Dartmouth (1950), p. 124.

¹³Within one year, from January to January 1797-1798, Robert Newman and Company alone reported that they had had eight vessels captured. See a letter to Thomas Pouditch of North Shields, Feb. 3, 1798. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

¹⁴See for example, Robert Newman and Company's letter to their agent, John Thorn, July 30, 1806 when they inform them that one of their own vessels have been captured, and that the "Greenland ships [have been] molested ..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

recovered for the cost of salvage.¹⁵ Occasionally they could be repurchased from their captors, which amounted to ransoming.¹⁶ Finally, the loss of vessels cost their owners the value of replacements, as well as increasing the uncertainty of their trade¹⁷ and reducing the amount of cargo they could handle.

In addition to costs and outright losses, wars proved additionally hazardous to shipping by adversely affecting the whole system of insurances. The most obvious problem was the demands made by Insurers for higher rates of premiums,¹⁸ which added to the shipper's

¹⁵ See for example, a letter from Robert Newman and Company to J. Power and Company, Cork, Sept. 17, 1795 "The Somme was taken by a Frenchman who had already captured an Irishman, he put the Irish captain and crew on the Somme, gave command of it to the Irish captain who is now claiming salvage rights ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E10.

¹⁶ See for example, a letter from Robert Newman and Company to Newman and Land, Oporto, Oct. 5, 1795 advising them that if two particular ships of theirs are brought into Vigo (after capture) then they wish to buy them back. Another example arises in a letter from Robert Newman and Company to Hunt and Newman, Sept. 3, 1806 "... should that happen we would give \$1,000 or \$1,200 for her, if not plundered, delivered at a neutral port ..." Newman Books Nos. 22/38, Reel E9 and 23/39, Reel E10.

¹⁷ It became a matter of a gamble as the firms realized. See for example the following comment made by Robert Newman and Company to their agent in Newfoundland, William Mollcott, Sept. 2, 1797 "As to the Daniel returning safe to you, it is twenty-to-one she do not ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

¹⁸ In two letters to their agents in Newfoundland during August of 1794 the firm mentioned first to William Mollcott on August 26th that "... Insurance since you left England is up 8% ..." and again to their other agent John Thorn, in August "... the risk at sea is very much increased, premiums up to 10% ..." Other examples are abundant, for instance, in a letter to Robert Whitfield, Oct. 31st, 1796 Robert Newman and Company complain "... we asked for the Somme to be insured at 8 guineas ... yet the policy says 10 guineas ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

other rising costs. Another problem was the inability to get sufficient insurance with the one insurer.¹⁹ In such a case a merchant wishing to insure £500 on his ship, £500 on the expected freight, and £1,000 on the cargo itself, might be permitted to insure only for half of each amount. This necessitated his going to additional insurers, causing them to suspect some unknown risk in the vessel to be insured.

²⁰ Depending upon the circumstances of the war, it might be impossible to make insurances in the area where it was most needed at any price.²⁰ With insurance premiums high because of a state of war, the merchant-owner was forced to judge more critically whether or not each particular vessel was worth insuring. Many times, vessels of low value or in a bad condition would not be insured, the owner preferring to take the risk of losing her to the definite expenses of high premiums.²¹

¹⁹ This happened to Robert Newman and Company during December of 1804 and they wrote on the first of December to complain to James Hunter that they would have preferred the underwriters to take fully one or the other amounts they had wished insured (upon the ship, its cargo, or the expected freight) leaving them free to make insurance elsewhere on the rest without prejudice with the other insurers. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁰ At least twice during the years 1796 and 1797 the firm of Robert Newman and Company wrote to their Newfoundland agent, John Congdon to discuss this situation. On Sept. 19, 1796 they noted "At present there is no making insurances without exception against captures in the ports of Portugal and Spain ..." Again, on August 22, 1797 they wrote him to say "... the underwriters will not now insure vessels to Portugal until it is known what terms the peace is made on ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E10.

²¹ This was a continual problem. During 1794 on Oct. 21 Robert Newman and Company wrote to Olive and Company to say "... it is not pleasant to take so much risk to ourselves but the exchange premiums demanded obliges us to do it ..." Again on February 15, 1797 Robert Newman and Company write to Olives, Colkett and Company of London to say "... if the underwriters don't like the risk of the Somme at 5 guineas, shall not at present give more..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

With high losses experienced during wartime even among insured vessels, it was not unknown that some insurers would go bankrupt. In such cases the merchant was unfortunate enough not to receive any settlement upon vessels lost.²² The higher costs of insurances and other items caused a higher rate for freights, and this worked hardships on those who were forced to send goods on board vessels owned by others.²³ On the other hand, the very small amount of shipping that was available at some times going to Newfoundland meant that some goods could not find room on board a vessel bound for the Island, at almost any freight.

Bound up with the question of insurance was the quandary of whether or not it was better to send vessels with convoy if they were available, or to let them 'go on the run'.²⁴ In favour of the convoy system were a number of points, among them the fact that ships were

²² During the spring of 1806 Robert Newman and Company experienced difficulties of this sort and they wrote on April 20 to Thomas Eastman to ask for assistance. "Can you give us any hopes of receiving anything from the Estates of the bankrupt underwriters of the Beaver." With some concern during October of the same year, the firm wrote to William Bennett and Company reporting that "... since our last [letter] we are informed from Greenock that the underwriters of that place have declined the business on insurance..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²³ On Oct. 1, 1795 Robert Newman and Company wrote to complain to Strange Brothers of Cadiz that "... the extravagant price [of fish] in Newfoundland leaves the shipper no prospect of profit when a high freight and other charges are added to the high price ... we think it reduced nearer to the certain loss ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²⁴ Vessels going on the run slipped out of their port, and ran for their destination, trusting to speed and luck to get there.

often obliged by the government to sail in such groupings.²⁵ They were, of course, somewhat safer than going alone. Also, sailing in convoy did assure the merchant a lower insurance rate.²⁶ On the other hand convoys could not guarantee absolute safety against enemy activity and they upset the timing of departures for there seemed inevitably to be delays while waiting for the convoys to be made up.²⁷ If a number of cargoes of the same item arrived in the same port at the same time (as they would if the ships sailed in convoy), then very poor sales often resulted for these cargoes.²⁸ The alternative to convoys was to take the chance of sailing alone, going 'on the run'. With a vessel gone on the run, the merchant had more to worry about, for the risks were greater and there was a

²⁵ See for example, a letter from Robert Newman and Company to Olives Colkett, April 22, 1797 "... we are very unpleasantly situated with the Brig. Somme ... at Sligo ... now more than a month under embargo not to sail without convoy". Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²⁶ See for example a letter from Robert Newman and Company to Olive and Bitten, July 10, 1806 "... if she had sailed with convoy last year she would have been entitled to a return of 4%. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁷ Robert Newman and Company letter to their agent William Wollcott, St. Lawrence, June 3, 1797 "the risk on the coast of Portugal is great but so may be the risk of spoiling the fish by waiting for convoy ..." Also letter to John Leigh, Lisbon, Dec. 5, 1805 "if she [Lark] waits long for convoy she must get in debt and we should prefer coming by the run ..." Newman Books No. 22/38, Reel E9 and No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁸ Letter to Robert Newman and Company from Newman Land and Company, Oporto, December 21, 1792 "but if a few more cargoes had come we should have soon had our prices down ..." Also letter from Robert Newman and Company to Elizabeth Fillis and Company, Plymouth, April 4, 1797 "The Lisbon fleet being arrived of course the sale will be dull but they must be sold ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

higher rate for insurance premiums. However, he also had more to gain, for going on the run meant a quicker passage, and individual arrivals at the port of destination. This was important in a trade like the Newfoundland fishery for a single early arrival at port could bring great profit.²⁹

One other major difficulty to shipping, which was an essential element in the Newfoundland trade, was trouble with labour. The outbreak of war brought on an almost immediate shortage of labour. Both directly and indirectly the Press caused a labour problem. Directly men were pressed into the Royal Navy and were no longer available for the merchant marine.³⁰ Indirectly, the fear of being impressed drove men to leave the coastal ports of Britain to escape service,³¹ while others remained in

²⁹See for example a letter from Robert Newman and Company to Alex. Sloan, Civita Vecchia, May 24, 1795 "... The Siren was fortunate by her arriving, the sales consequently very pleasing ... The risk is high in the Mediterranean, it takes away all profit unless you meet such an extraordinary sale as you made this year". Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

³⁰Many regulations were passed which limited the numbers and quality of the men permitted to man the merchant's vessels. Robert Newman and Company letter to O'Brien and Hunt of Waterford, April 18, 1795: "the convoy is expected in Torbay to take the trade which will be very small as we are not allowed to carry fishermen ..." In another letter, this time to William Penrose, Waterford, 18th April, 1795 the firms of Robert Newman and Company complained "... the restrictions as to men are worse here than with you, neither fishermen nor youngsters being allowed but one ordinary seamen to 70 tons and invalids." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

³¹Robert Newman and Company letter to Peter Symons, Totnes during 1798-1799 "re Martin's bill, cannot be made payable in London but the money may be had at any time here ... and if his wife comes (he had better not fearing the impress) ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

Newfoundland or fled to the American Mainland.³² As a result ships were forced to sail with inadequate crews, which intensified any natural perils the ship might face in the course of the voyage, and reduced the amount of trade and fishing that could be carried on. Inadequate crews led underwriters to demand higher premiums, and unable to plan ahead as to the supply of labour, shipping was often delayed and operations like fishing remained in confusion.

As a result of the labour shortage that prevailed during war-time, employers were forced to give higher wages for what labour was available. To avoid an inadequate labour supply, unskilled men were taken on, good labour was held in high esteem and foreigners were used to supplement the ranks of their seamen.³³ This raised still further, along with insurance rates, freight rates, etc., the costs of production for the migratory fishery. In adjusting, the merchants turned to more permanent employees to fish for them, placing no reliance on getting men to the island each spring.³⁴ They also turned to buying fish for goods more and more. Those who lived permanently on the island adjusted also, in their own way, making their operations more economical. Planters reduced the numbers of servants they employed and a lower servant-master

³²R.G. Lounsbury, "Yankee Trade at Newfoundland", the New England Quarterly, III (October, 1930), pp. 617-618.

³³Robert Newman and Company letter to Henry Tozer, Bristol, March 27, 1795 "as you have two foreigners, an apprentice, yourself, and mate would have you clear out for Newfoundland ...". Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

³⁴Robert Newman and Company letter to John Congdon, 23 Jan., 1795, also letter from the Company to J. Maldron, Poole, 2 April, 1795. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

ratio is noticeable.³⁵ Ordinary fishermen either went into share fishing with others like themselves, or operated their fishery with the whole family, women and children included, acting together to produce the finished article.

Besides the hazards to shipping which war brought on, there was the continued difficulty of defending the fishery itself. The nature of the trade was such that its elements were very scattered, both on the sea in the shape of individual vessels or convoys anywhere between England, Newfoundland, and the ports of Southern Europe and on the land, with establishments scattered in numerous places around the coast. Because of its very dispersed nature the Newfoundland trade was very vulnerable to attack, plundering, burning, and temporary destruction. In the face of these dangers, it was realized that the only method of defending Newfoundland was to be superior in naval forces,³⁶ and this was not so at all times of the year.³⁷ While there might be quite a number of naval vessels belonging to Britain around the coast at the height of the season they departed at the end of the season escorting convoys back to market and home. This left the island exposed for the rest of the year and the French did indeed take advantage of this situation more than once. On the other hand, since what was destroyed was not very elaborate it could easily be rebuilt as soon as the enemy left.

³⁵ Proportion of masters to servants 1766-1791: 1766 - over 7; 1774 - over 5; 1785 - under 4; 1789 - over 3; 1791 - under 3. K. Matthews, *History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery*, p. 546.

³⁶ See for example the reference to a "great need for many small armed cruisers at Newfoundland." C.O. 194/33.31.

³⁷ See for example the references to "the privateers which used to come in the spring and commit violent depredations without opposition." C.O. 194/37.71.

War brought on difficulties as well with the supply system as it had evolved. With a war on it was difficult to judge in January what supplies would be needed in an uncertain fishery months and months in the future. Indeed the frank merchants admitted to their resident agents that they could scarcely tell what was going to happen from day to day, let alone that far in the future.³⁸ This applied very much to provisions of food and to commercial necessities such as salt.³⁹ In the places that customarily supplied the Newfoundland merchants they found that during war the Navy itself could cause them unexpected shortages.⁴⁰ If military conditions produced a break with the supplying country, as it did with America during the 1775-1783 war, then the whole fishery could be in chaos. Even if cargoes were safely collected, there was the higher chance that they might be lost enroute. These difficulties within the strained supply system led to higher prices for supplies and this raised still further the mounting costs of production. On the other hand, during wars, there could also occur an unexpected abundance of

³⁸ See for example a letter from Robert Newman and Company to their agent, John Thorn, May 15, 1805 "... At present things seem to wear a peaceable aspect in Portugal but changes are so sudden it is not to be relied on for a week". Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

³⁹ Robert Newman and Company letter to their agent John Congdon, Jan. 23, 1795 "If any fishery it [salt] must be scarce so many ships taken and lost ... Pease are not to be bought, butter very high ... bread and flour you must not expect from England ..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴⁰ Robert Newman and Company letter to Peter Hallet, Jersey, April 15, 1794 referring to expensive cattle "... we informed him they would be so much more as this country is drained of all kinds of cattle for the Navy at Plymouth ... a large fleet so continually in Torbay they could not now be purchased at such price." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

items useful for the Newfoundland trade, perhaps through the unexpected arrival of vessels or through the sale of prize goods. In such a case the value of an item as it had previously been might decline, and those who had purchased earlier might suffer a loss. With the purchasing of prize goods which were often useful in alleviating shortages in the area, it was not always known if they would be permitted to export them to Newfoundland.⁴¹ Also, additional duties and restrictions might unexpectedly be put upon any article, whether prize goods or not.⁴²

Finally, and in the long run most importantly, the outbreak of war brought on difficulties with the marketing system. Partial closure of the main markets in Southern Europe resulted in increased dangers in approaching the ones remaining open.⁴³ In this case, with too much fish funnelled into those remaining open, prices usually fell distinctly to the merchant's disadvantage.⁴⁴ At the very worst, all of the main

⁴¹ See for example Robert Newman and Company letter to Peter Symons, Plymouth, Oct. 26, 1796 declining a shipment of wine and brandy "... in consequence of your not being able to deliver it at that time free for exportation to Newfoundland". Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴² A letter from Robert Newman and Company to Olives Colkett and Company, London, Nov. 2, 1796 refers to a new duty on wines. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴³ Robert Newman and Company letter to John Leigh, Lisbon, Jan. 25, 1799. The trade on the coast of Portugal hath lately been so badly protected that it almost deters people from attempting your ports." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴⁴ Robert Newman and Company letter to Newman and Land, Porto, Feb. 27, 1798 "Should suppose the ships with this convoy will give you a large supply of fish and people from Newfoundland will attempt your market in preference to Lisbon which may cause an oversupply ...". Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

markets would be almost suicidal to approach.⁴⁵ Fish had to be sent to British controlled areas, such as the West Indies during the American War, where the returns were inadequate since the only demand was for low grade fish. Otherwise a way had to be found to get the fish indirectly to its original destination. Fish was sold to Americans at times, who transferred it to Italy, or fish might be shipped home to Great Britain from which it was trans-shipped in neutral bottoms to Southern Europe.⁴⁶ In these cases, however, freight costs could be doubled, and the sale prices to the middleman were not nearly as advantageous as they would be at its destination. The basic difficulty caused by war with the marketing system was the inability to plan ahead; fish bound for particular ports were prepared both as to grade, size of the fish, and size of the selling units,⁴⁷ all of which would be upset if it was necessary to send it to alternative ports.

The outbreak of war had, in general, the effect of cutting contacts with other places, upsetting previously established patterns of

⁴⁵ Robert Newman and Company letter to their agent John Congdon, August 4, 1796 "We have some reason to fear the Portuguese may be forced to shut their ports against us and the Spanish also. If they do, the Newfoundland trade is at an end..." Also, a letter to him, August 22, 1797. "The Portuguese have made peace with the French and we continue ignorant of the terms. Some people apprehend we shall go to war with them which will completely ruin the Newfoundland trade..." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴⁶ K. Matthews, History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p 589.

⁴⁷ S. Ryan, "The Newfoundland Cod Fishery In the Nineteenth Century", pp. 134-136.

supply and demand. The re-establishment of peace resulted in lower ship losses, lower rates of freight and insurance, a greater labour supply, and open markets for Newfoundland fish. However, the advent of peace could have its problems too. There was initially the uncertainty of its appearance. The merchants were plagued, all through wartime, with the necessity and desire to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the establishment of peace and it led them to prepare to expand many times when peace did not actually take place.⁴⁸ In such a case they were over-extending during a time when normally they would be rather constricted in scope. Rumors of peace alone could disrupt the normal course of events.⁴⁹ With peace once established, there were still additional problems, such as the uncertainty of its duration. Thus there was a need to balance the returns to be had from an expanding operation against the possibility of a fresh outbreak of war. Peace was often accompanied by an influx of new and inexperienced people into the trade; these competed with the wartime participants of the trade. Foreign fisheries tended to revive, as well, giving the

⁴⁸ Witness the dilemma of Robert Newman and Company expressed in a letter to their agent William Wolcott, at St. Lawrence, September 5, 1795 "... We cannot see any prospect of peace but quite the contrary, at the same time wish to keep boats, etc. in order and readiness should it take place in the spring." Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴⁹ See for example a letter from Robert Newman and Company to their agent, John Thorn, July 30, 1806 "... We are not in opinion it (the achievement of peace) can be speedily done and believe it yet far distant but these reports may affect the price of fish with you... you must expect that when the reports of these negotiations get to Newfoundland those who are not obliged to sell will keep it expecting accounts of peace this winter but we repeat we ourselves do not expect it." Newman Book No. 23/89, Reel E10.

British fishery additional competition.⁵⁰ Several years of good prices after a long war tended to bring on over-production and a collapse in the markets. With the rising numbers involved in the trade, timing again became of crucial importance. As well, through a time lag in price adjustments, the cost of labour often remained relatively high during the initial years of peace.

⁵⁰K. Matthews, History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, pp. 501-502.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEWMANS OF DARTMOUTH

The Newman family, originally from the upriver town of Totnes,¹ had moved to the nearby port of Dartmouth on the coast of Devon by the end of the fourteenth century,² where they established themselves as importers and exporters, shipping cloth and woollens, and by 1503, Thomas Newman of Dartmouth was importing wines. At this time he bartered some of his wine for fish and salt,³ a pattern which, curiously enough, the family would reverse for most of its time in Newfoundland. The family explored the fish trade more fully and within two generations they were not only dealing in fish cargoes but were making the long voyage to the Newfoundland coast to procure it. In 1589 John Newman brought in two cargoes from Newfoundland,⁴

¹Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

²They were residing in Dartmouth by 1395, as is attested to by an original deed in the Newman Archives and as cited in the Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Co., 1951, published to commemorate the Festival of Britain, p. 7.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

including several tons of cod oil, a valuable by-product of the fishery. On another trip a forty ton vessel of his brought back to Dartmouth 98,000 small Newfoundland fish.⁵

Some of the family's resources seem to have been consistently invested in shipping, and the ownership of both fishing and cargo vessels gave the family control of the whole process. Thus, during the early 1600's John Newman sent his fishing vessels off to the fishery. Their catches were turned over to his cargo ships which took them off to the markets of Spain and the Mediterranean.⁶ Although most of their vessels seem to have been between 40 and 50 tons, some of them could be considerably larger, and in 1626 John Newman was owner-captain of a 180 ton vessel, a respectable size even years later.⁷ That the investment in a single ship and its cargo was great can be seen in the £4000 loss sustained by Thomas Newman and an associate⁸ in 1661 with the capture of his fish-laden vessel by a Spanish man-of-war.⁹

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷ K. Matthews, A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p. 72.

⁸ This is attested to by a letter of Marque at the Public Record Office, as cited in The Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Co., p. 8.

⁹ Ibid.

In their trading activities the Newman men, like other Devonshire contemporaries, often commanded their own ships.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Newman family and the Newfoundland fishery had become inseparable. They had formed connections in the ports of Spain and Portugal where Newfoundland fish found its best markets, and had founded at least seasonal fishing stations in Newfoundland.¹⁰

During the 1660's and the 1670's, one of the Newman men, Thomas, went into partnership with another merchant of Dartmouth by the name of Mudd. Their partnership covered trading both in England and overseas. They worked together from 1668 to 1678, after which the partnership was liquidated. In settling up with each other, the partners fell into a dispute, resulting in Newman bringing Mudd into the Dartmouth Borough Court.¹¹

In later years the firm claimed to have operated a plantation in St. John's as a joint concern with the Holdsworth family since 1700 or even before, a plantation which did not leave their employ until 1805.¹² By 1711, the firm had opened a house at Lisbon, Portugal to handle the marketing of their fish in Portugal. Their interest in Portugal increased and by 1735 the family established a long-term

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹ Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹² Robert Newman and Co. letter to Stephen Knight, May 27, 1805. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

partnership with the Holdsworths of Dartmouth and the Olives of Poole in the Oporto region of Portugal, on the Douro River, a prime market area for Newfoundland fish and a major centre for wine production (a produce which they imported into England as a return cargo).¹³

Between 1730 and 1770 the main portion of the family's business in Newfoundland was conducted by two brothers, Robert and Richard, whose trading activities were at times connected, at times separate. Like many men of the South Devon ports, they operated in the Conception Bay-St. John's area.¹⁴ Between them they seem to have operated about ten vessels, one of the largest fleets in the trade.¹⁵ Until the 1770's, Robert Newman tended to operate from St. John's and the nearby area, while his brother Richard and his son, William, who succeeded him, increasingly centered on the Conception Bay area.¹⁶ In 1757, Robert Newman bought from John Gerrard for £576 what was later called the firm's Upper Premises. This purchase gave him for

¹³ Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Co., pp. 11-12.

¹⁴ See Map 2, page 38.

¹⁵ Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹⁶ In 1807 William Newman's agent signed a petition on his behalf along with other Conception Bay merchants. P. Tocque, Newfoundland As It Was and As It Is in 1877 (Toronto: J.B. Magrath, 1878), p. 113.

his headquarters "all that mess-vale, plantations, situated and lying at the upper end of the harbour of St. John's ... dwelling houses, stores, stages, boats, rooms, meadows, gardens, and other houses with all ways and waterways."¹⁷ There is also a reference to Governor Webb settling titles to land during the 1760's, among which is Newman's land at the foot of McBrides Hill.¹⁸ During this time the principals appear to have come annually to Newfoundland. Social life for merchants at the time is indicated by a very old playing card, on which Robert Newman was asked to dine with the garrison, obviously meaning an evening of card playing.¹⁹

The particular firm which is of interest in this study is that of Robert Newman and Company as it existed just prior to the opening of the American war in 1775, including the subsequent regroupings which took place within that firm until the year 1806.

¹⁷ Letter from Robert Newman to Collingwood, April 1935, in Baine Johnson File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹⁸ D.W. Prowse, A History of Newfoundland (MacMillan & Co., London, 1895), p. 305.

¹⁹ Robert Newman to Collingwood, April 1, 1935, in Baine Johnson File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

In 1774 Robert Newman, Sr. was involved in the Newfoundland fishery, with most of his business concentrated in the Southern Shore-St. John's district. Only one of his six sons seems to have been directly involved with this firm. This was his third son, John, who besides doing business for himself in Newfoundland also acted as his father's agent there.²⁰ Robert Newman died in 1776 and his firm was re-formed. Although the eldest son, Robert Newman, Jr. held substantial shares of stock in the new firm, he does not seem to have been actively involved at first.²¹ The second son, Thomas, had already entered the Portuguese wine trade with which the family was also connected. He and another prominent Dartmouth family combined to form the firm of Newman and Land, of Oporto, Portugal. Though this was a separate business venture, there was considerable contact with the Dartmouth-Newfoundland firm since Oporto was the major port for the dispersal of Newman's Newfoundland fish. Thomas had not been involved with his father's firm and he was not involved with this regrouping.²² The next son, John, was the only one of the six brothers who had had any previous experience with the Newfoundland trade, having operated there

²⁰ John Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

²¹ See the Stock Account, John Newman and Co. Ledger Book, 1776. Newman Book No. 6/9, Reel E2,

²² Thomas Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

both independently and on his father's account, and it was around this son that the new firm centered. Younger than John were his three brothers, Holdsworth, Lydston, and Richard. The oldest of these, Holdsworth, remained basically separate from the family's main firm. He maintained a variety of trading and financial interests, dealing in real estate, dabbling in privateering, a little trade to Newfoundland, and during the American War conducting a whale fishery in Greenland waters.²³ The younger Lydston and Richard, though they, like Robert, held substantial shares in the new company, were not active at first.²⁴

Thus, for a number of years after 1776 the major part of the family's activities in Newfoundland were under the direct control of John through the newly formed firm of "John Newman and Company". During the four years which followed, his elder brother, Robert, gained some direct experience with the Newfoundland trade. Part of this experience arose through a private and personal share in one of the vessels which John used in the trade.²⁵ In 1780 John died, and the family firm again had to be re-formed. Thomas and Holdsworth were completely taken up with their own business activities and again seem

²³ Holdsworth Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

²⁴ See the Stock Account, John Newman and Co. Ledger Book, 1776. Newman Book No. 6/9, Reel E2.

²⁵ Half the profits of the Brig Active are entered to the account of Robert Newman and Co., in the John Newman and Co. Ledger Book, Newman Book No. 6/9, Reel E2.

to have had nothing to do with the reshaping of the family firm. This left the three brothers, Robert (the eldest), and Lydston and Richard. "John Newman and Co." was dissolved, and Robert assumed direct control. The firm was renamed "Robert Newman and Co.", under which name it continued to exist until 1806.²⁶ Though Robert seems to have been the dominating influence in the newly-formed company, Lydston and Richard entered the partnership with equal stock²⁷ and they entered into active direction of the new firm.²⁸ In 1782 one of the partners went to London and opened the House of Newman and Land of London, in connection with their general merchandising business. This firm later became the major house of the family, the name having changed to Newman, Hunt, and Company.²⁹

²⁶ Robert Newman and Co. Ledger Books cover the years 1780-1796, and 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3, and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

²⁷ Robert, Richard, and Lydston shared equally £9000 stock. See the Stock Account, Robert Newman and Co. Ledger 1780. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

²⁸ This seems apparent from scanning the various letter books for the period, for there are many references to the three giving directions, going to other ports on business, etc.

²⁹ The firm under this same name still operates out of London. The Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Co., p. 13.

The Yearly Cycle of the Newfoundland Trade³⁰

At the beginning of each year, the Dartmouth headquarters of the firm was busily engaged in organizing another year's operations in Newfoundland. One of the first things to be done was the recruitment of labour to go to the island. Men were needed to fish on behalf of the company itself and to supply the needs of the local planters for seasonal or temporary labour. Others were to be employed on the company's various premises as shore crews for making up the fish, as specialized tradesmen such as coopers, or as clerks, accountants, or agents for the growing number of establishments. The men recruited at this time of the year were obtained in the West Country villages, often inland ones, such as Totnes and Ashprington, the recruiting being done for the firm by their agents and ships' captains.

At the same time of the year, the firm in Dartmouth arranged to purchase goods and provisions to supply themselves and the planters for another year's fishery. Much of the supply came from other towns in England, being brought to Dartmouth by land or by coasting ships. Thus, the Brig Leviathan in 1781 coasted from port to port, from

³⁰ Most of this discussion is based on the letters sent out by the firm, particularly to their Newfoundland agents, and on the accounts in their ledgers, particularly the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, the ships' accounts, the Cod Fish and Cod Oil Accounts.

Teignmouth to Liverpool, from there to London, etc.³¹ From London the firm purchased tea, sugar, pepper, pitch and tar, medicines, molasses and some rum, etc.³² Much of the cargoes made up of goods from London seem to have been imports from the East India trade. At Plymouth the firm purchased nails, cordage, soap, some gin and some medicines. From Portsmouth they bought amounts of white oakum used in the upkeep of shipping. From Liverpool came a variety of goods classified together as sundries. From Bristol came the main supplies of manufactured goods: nails, ironmongery, iron hoops, shot, careening blocks for ship repairs, and as well, amounts of colouring, some snuff and tobacco. From Dartmouth itself and from towns nearby came hats and shoes and other clothing items, spunyarn, grabnails and axes.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century the shipping of these provisions to Newfoundland was done less exclusively from Dartmouth itself, probably foreshadowing the firm's move out of Dartmouth to London during the early nineteenth century.³³ Thus, in 1780 there was a single cargo shipped directly to the Newfoundland stores from London. During the next two years there were no direct shipments from London but in 1783 two ships sailed from London directly to the firm's

³¹ The brig Leviathan Account, Robert Newman and Co. Ledger 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

³² The following discussion is based on a close examination of the Newfoundland Stores' Accounts, Robert Newman and Co. Ledger 1780-1796, 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

³³ The following paragraph is based on an analysis of the ports of origin and ports of destination of Newman's vessels from 1775 to 1806. See Tables 36 and 37, pp. 177 and 178.

premises in Newfoundland. Two ships again sailed directly from London to Newfoundland for Robert Newman and Company in 1784. This direct trade from London, though it fell off for a few years, again revived during the 1790's. The port of Bristol as the point of departure for manufactured goods and tobacco was prominent after the end of the American War (1783-87) and again after the opening of war with Napoleon (1794-96). During the 1790's several cargoes left Liverpool to go directly to the firm in Newfoundland.

In readying for the coming season's activities all ships had to be outfitted and if need be repaired. Local Dartmouth tradesmen were thus involved intimately with the fortunes of the Newfoundland trade, much of their employment being created by the annual outfitting of these Newfoundland-bound vessels. After leaving England many of these vessels stopped in Ireland where more of the labour required for the season was recruited. Here, too, much of their food provisions were picked up, having been ordered from the firm's regular business connections in each port. Thus, one of their big suppliers in Waterford, G. and W. Penrose, had cargoes of butter, bread, flour, pease, and barrels of pork, beef, and oatmeal, and occasionally glass items, prepared for loading either on the firm's own vessels or on ships hired to go to Newfoundland.³⁴ This particular firm ceased to

³⁴ See the Newfoundland Stores' Accounts, as well as the account with the Penrose firm itself, in the Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers, 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

supply Robert Newman and Company around 1790, but its place was taken by other firms in Waterford, among them O'Brien and Hunt. Similarly at Limerick and Cork other Irish firms collected cargoes of Irish provisions on behalf of the Dartmouth firm. Irish trade concentrated more on Waterford as the period progressed, but the whole of the Irish provisions trade declined quite substantially as the trading in North American food stuffs increased.³⁵

One by one the vessels arrived in Newfoundland; anchoring and unloading perhaps at St. John's but increasingly at the South Coast ports in which the firm had become established. The men hired on behalf of the planters were assigned to their employers, the firm having received passage money for their trips out.³⁶ The food and other provisions were distributed among the various premises. If whole cargoes had been landed at St. John's, for example, portions of them might be shipped to the 'Westward'³⁷ by small coasting vessels. In England, during the very early spring, the firm had outfitted a number of banking ships. Having arrived in Newfoundland at the South Coast and having discharged the passengers they carried, the bulk of the

³⁵This again is based on an analysis of the firm's shipping ports of origin, ports of destination, etc. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter VI. See Tables 36 and 37, pp. 177 and 178.

³⁶Newfoundland Stores' Account, and various ships' accounts, 1780-1800. Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers, 1780-1796, 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

³⁷This is a term used by the firm to refer to their ports on the South Coast.

seasonal labour, the banking ships were put into an immediate state of readiness for their first trip to the Grand Banks. The firm's agents began to organize any crews working for the firm itself in the inshore fishery and proceeded to issue supplies and equipment to the residents to enable them to proceed with their own fishery, upon which much of the firm's business during the year would depend. Having in some cases cleared his last year's debt completely, the supplies and provisions necessary for this season's fishery put the planter back into debt against which only a large catch at a good price might clear.

In the meantime some vessels which had left England had gone, not directly to Newfoundland, but to the salt supplying areas in France, Spain, Portugal, or the Atlantic Islands. These early arrivals of salt supplies, plus the amount that the agent had judged prudent to keep over last winter, had to suffice until later cargoes came in.

The English vessels that had gone directly to Newfoundland now either left port to go banking or to take cargoes of winter fish (some fish was retained every fall to supply the early demand for fish) to Spain, Portugal or Italy. Some of the smaller vessels, coasters or bankers when not in actual use on the banks, made runs up to the North American mainland for cargoes of lumber and provisions. This trade became increasingly important and cut into the Irish trade in provisions.³⁸ Quebec became the main source for lumber needed for the building and repairing of ships and premises, and for the construction of the very

³⁸This will be discussed more fully in Chapter VI.

important fish barrels and oil casks. From Quebec and from New York came bread and flour as well as barrels of beef and pork. By the very late period, around 1798, Halifax had become another rather important port from which the firm's vessels picked up cargoes of molasses, tobacco and lumber. This North American trade became stronger and the firm deliberately built up a market there for the wines³⁹ which Newman's themselves produced in Portugal or, on a lesser scale, purchased elsewhere. This gave them a desirable and valuable cargo to exchange for the necessary North American ones.

While these vessels were making their North American runs, and while the agents were organizing the collection of bait for the fishermen, the winter fish aboard the company's vessels or on hired ships arrived at the markets. The markets were very much dependent upon the military conditions of the particular year, as can be seen in the following list of the market ports frequented by Newman's between 1780 and the end of the century. Kept out of their traditional markets in Europe and the Mediterranean by the war with America, the firm sent at least one cargo of fish each year to the West Indies. The end of the war reopened the markets in Portugal and Spain and the West Indian market was no longer used. With the reopening of the markets there was

³⁹Various ships' accounts show increasing amounts of wines; the firm's letter book for July 17, 1812 refers to the deliberate development of a wine market on the mainland. Newman Book No. 54/77, Reel E27.

TABLE 78

Markets for Fish Exported by Newman's 1780-1799^a

<u>Year</u>	<u>Market Ports</u>
1780	Lisbon, Oporto, West Indies
1781	Lisbon, Oporto, West Indies
1782	Lisbon, Oporto, West Indies
1783	Oporto, West Indies, Rivadeo, Cadiz, Alicante
1784	Lisbon, Oporto, Rivadeo, Bilbao, Cadiz, Alicante, Figueira
1785	Lisbon, Oporto, Bilbao, Marin, Alicante, Cartagena, Naples
1786	Lisbon, Oporto, Viana, Bilbao, Ponte Vedra, Marin, Barcelona, Cadiz, Malaga, Civita Vecchia
1787	Oporto, Viana do Castelo across from Oporto, Ponte Vedra, Naples, Alicante, Cadiz, Cartagena
1788	Oporto, Viana, Alicante, Naples, Cartagena
1789	Oporto, Viana, Alicante, Bilbao, Naples, Tyall
1790	Oporto, Viana, Bilbao, Civita Vecchia
1791	Cadiz, Figueira, Coñanna, one unnamed port in Portugal
1792	Oporto, Viana, Ragueneau
1793	Oporto, Viana, Civita Vecchia, Cadiz
1794	Oporto, Viana, Civita Vecchia, Cadiz
1795	Oporto, Viana, Lisbon, Cadiz, Civita Vecchia, Naples, Guernsey
1796	Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz
1797	Lisbon
1798	Lisbon, Oporto
1799	Lisbon, Oporto, Leghorn (Italy)

^a This list has been drawn up from the Ships' Accounts and the Cod Fish Accounts, Robert Newman & Co., Ledgers 1780-1796, 1796-1806, Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

a scramble to different ports as the merchants searched for the areas of greatest profitability. This steadied somewhat by 1788. Then came the glut, followed quickly by the opening of war with France. From 1793 to early 1796 the merchants' ships went to Portugal, Cadiz in Spain and to one or two ports within the Straits. By 1796 Napoleon had entered Italy and Spain changed sides in the war, becoming an ally of France. The markets were thus abruptly restricted and many merchants went bankrupt.⁴⁰ During this later period the only reliable ports for the disposal of Newfoundland fish were in Portugal, primarily at Lisbon and Oporto. The one shipment that Newman's managed to slip into Italy during 1799 reflected French defeats on the Italian peninsula during the early part of the year.⁴¹

Since the firm's strongest markets were on the Atlantic coast of Portugal and Spain, it was at these places that the firm maintained firm commercial connections with specific firms⁴² that would carefully arrange the disposal of any Newman's fish that might enter the harbour. Thus in Atlantic Spain at Bilbao, Villavasco and Co. were their agents and in Portugal (at Oporto and Viana), Thomas Newman's company, Newman

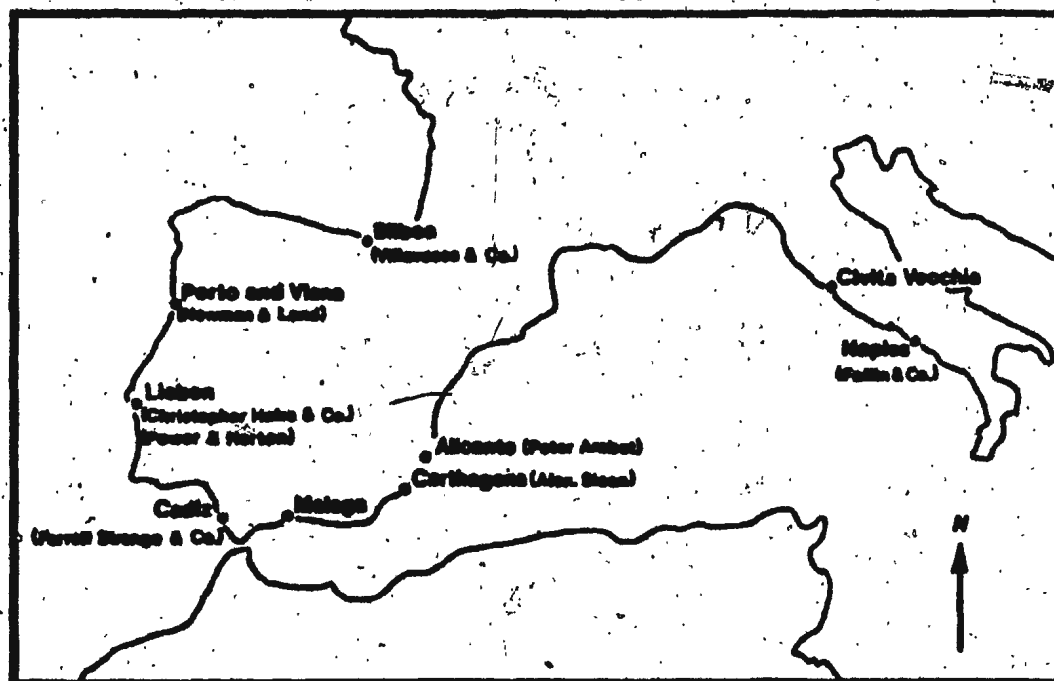
⁴⁰ Matthews, West of England-Newfoundland Fishery, p. 589.

⁴¹ "War and Peace in an Age of Upheaval 1793-1830", The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IX (edited by C.W. Crawley), p. 257.

⁴² Commercial connection can be seen in the Newfoundland Stores' Accounts and in the Cod Fish Accounts, as well as in accounts kept with individual correspondents. Robert Newman & Co. Ledgers 1780-1796, 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and 9/10, Reels E4 and E5. The letter books are also valuable for seeing these connections. Newman Books No. 22/38, Reel E9 and No. 26/45, Reel E11, and No. 23/39, Reel E10.

and Land. If the ship arrived at Lisbon it was cared for either by Christopher Hake and Co. or by Power and Horton. The Cadiz agents were Farrell, Strange and Company. In the Mediterranean the firm had agents at Malaga, Carthegena, Allicante (Peter Arabet), Civita Vecchia (Alex Sloan) and at Naples. These firms acted primarily as disposers of vessels when they were in port and dealt with local laws and bureaucracies. Once the cargo of fish was disposed of, two possibilities were open to the ship's captain. He could return immediately to England or go back to Newfoundland first for another cargo of fish before returning to England. Toward the end of the century it seems to have become increasingly usual for these ships to make two or more trips to

NEWMAN'S COMMERCIAL CORRESPONDENTS



Map No 4

the markets before returning to England.⁴³ At market then, the ship would pick up a cargo of salt which was necessary in Newfoundland as the fishermen began bringing in loads of fish to be made up by the shore crews. The salt having been unloaded in Newfoundland, another cargo of fish was taken to the market, perhaps to the same port. However, if the firm's correspondent felt that market demands had changed in the meantime, the ship would be sent to a more favorable port. Here the judgement and experience of the agents proved to be so valuable, for neither the ships' captains nor the agents in Newfoundland, nor even the partners in Dartmouth could predict the market.

With the disposal of this second cargo (and few, if any, ships made more than two market trips annually) many of the vessels began to make up cargoes to take back to England. These consisted of salt, some fruit, and increasingly amounts of wine.⁴⁴ While in the process of gathering a cargo, the ship might make a little revenue doing some coasting between ports in the market countries. Thus, in 1786 the Brig Live Oak seems to have received payments for freight due on a cargo of corn taken from Barletta to

⁴³This will be discussed more fully in Chapter VI.

⁴⁴See the various ships' accounts, Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers 1780-1796, 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

Lisbon.⁴⁵ In 1792, the Brig Siren received payment of freight on corn while in the market countries.⁴⁶

The vessels arrived back in England carrying cargoes of oranges and other fruit, salt, and wine. It can be noticed in the various ships' accounts that the port of arrival in England, though usually Dartmouth, became more diversified with London becoming the other major port of entry for these imports.⁴⁷ The wines were brought to England, not only on consignment for others; but increasingly as an item to be sold in England and elsewhere by the firm itself. During periods of war the ports of Spain and the inner Mediterranean were closed to the firm's ships, forcing heavy concentration on northern Portugal where wines were the local product most likely to be profitable in England.

In Newfoundland by the fall of the year all the fish taken by the firm's own fishing crews had been collected and made up by the shore crews. The residents dealing with the firm began to settle up their accounts as the firm collected the planter's fish for shipment to market along with the rest of their own. The bulk of the summer

⁴⁵ Account of the Brig Live Oak, 1786, Robert Newman & Co. Ledger 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

⁴⁶ Account of the Brig Siren, 1792, Robert Newman & Co. Ledger 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

⁴⁷ This observation resulted from an analysis of the ports of origin and ports of destination for the firm's fleet. See Tables 36, and 37, pp. 177 and 178.

fish was shipped off to market as quickly as vessels were available, in order to get to market before the price dropped while demand held. At most of the establishments arrangements were made to leave an amount of the season's catch in order to have cargoes ready for the market as early as possible the next spring. The banking ships, having finished their season's fishing, began to pick up cargoes of cod and seal oil, some green and core fish, and a few furs, all of which were to be sold on the English market. The bankers carried passengers back to England, including those who had worked as seasonal labour for the planters, the fishing and shore crews of the firm, and the few specialized tradesmen employed by the firm. The agents travelling to England on these same bankers brought back to the Dartmouth headquarters in Newfoundland books, invoices and bills, a little cash, and lists of requirements for the next year.

During the months of November and December the Dartmouth branch found itself increasingly busy. The vessels were arriving in port from Southern Europe with cargoes for which sales had to be arranged. The bankers were coming in, and their cargoes of oil, fish, and furs also had to be disposed of at the best prices available. Final settlement had to be made with the firm's seasonal labour before the men were finally dispersed. Information on market conditions had to be obtained from the ships' captains and the books of the company had to be brought up to date, now that the Newfoundland books and the ships' accounts were available. The state of the company had to be assessed,

and the scope of next year's operations had to be gauged with due consideration taken of the military and economic factors that existed at the moment and were likely to develop soon.

The year ended and the new year began with the company in Dartmouth seeing to the repair of its shipping, to the refitting of its present vessels and the purchasing of new ones. The process of buying up quantities of supplies and provisions from all over England had to be begun again, deliveries of the same materials had to be arranged, and the recruitment of the next year's labour force had to be planned. The yearly cycle of the firm's activities had begun again.

As large merchants in the Newfoundland trade the firm of Robert Newman and Company were in effect vendors of British goods on the island. The distances involved meant that they had to be active ship-owners, aspects of which included the purchase, operation and sale of shipping for profit and the making of partial ventures with other merchant firms. They acted as exporters of British-made fish and, because of the need of return cargoes from the fish markets to England, they acted as importers of Continental goods, mostly salt, fruit, and increasingly wines.

CHAPTER V

NEWMAN'S TRADE DURING THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

During the last twenty years of the eighteenth century Robert Newman and Company continued to be very active in the Newfoundland trade. Perhaps the most important indicator of the firm's health during this period is to be found in their Profit/Loss figures for the company as a whole. These figures are given in the following table.

TABLE 19

Profit/Loss on Total Operations ¹				Profit/Loss on Total Operations ¹			
	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1780	9,000			(to open Co)	1791	641	15 3/4 (Loss)
1781	2,325	13	4 1/2	1792	3,506	3	11 1/2
1782	1,526	15	9 1/2	1793	435	8	3 1/2
1783	3,248	2	8 1/2	1794	2,294	4	9 1/2
1784	1,988	18	1 (Loss)	1795	4,782	15	1 1/2
1785	9,002	18	11 1/2	1796	28,862	11	5 1/2
1786		*		1797	11,362		11
1787	4,112	7	7 1/2	1798	5,427	17	8
1788	2,867	14	3	1799	316	16	11
1789	3,998	6	1/2 (Loss)	1800	8,303		6
1790	1,610	14	2 1/2 (Loss)	1801	8,951	16	3

* The figures for this year are unavailable.

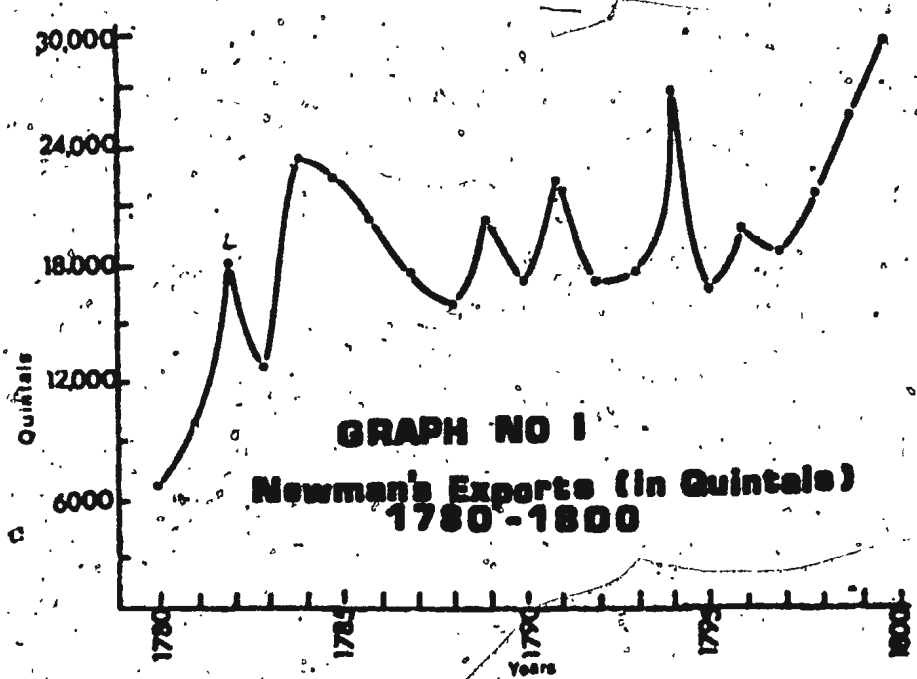
¹ These figures are obtained from the Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers for 1780-1796, and 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

From these figures given in Table 19 we can make some very simple, but also very interesting, observations about the firm during this period. For one, if the £9000 with which the firm was begun is ignored, and remembering that amounts are modified by the missing figures for 1786, these figures show that the firm's total profits for this period were roughly £97,400, and their total losses were roughly £8,240, clearly a very healthy record. Thus, in the twenty-odd years for which figures are available, the firm cleared just over £89,000, almost ten times the £9,000 stock with which the firm was begun.

Looking again, this time more closely, at these profit and loss figures, one notices a great discrepancy between the profitability of different periods. First, it can be seen that like other firms in the Newfoundland trade, Newman's experienced their major losses during the crash and depression years of 1789-1791. However, unlike most other merchants, the war with France which followed soon after the depression was not a period of additional stress and bankruptcy, but a period of enormous prosperity, a glaring difference. The firm had been quite profitable overall during the preceding decade but during the preceding decade but during the six year period of 1796-1801, when many merchants were declining or going bankrupt, Newman's cleared over two-thirds of their total profits for the entire period. During the war they were not only able to survive, but they were extremely profitable, so prosperous that the firm was set on a secure basis for the following and most successful century in which they operated in Newfoundland.

These figures of Profit and Loss for the company as a whole are made up of profits and losses during a given year of a number of major separate accounts, and a great number of minor ones. Their Newfoundland operation appeared in three major accounts - the Cod Fish Account, the God and Seal Oil Account, and the Newfoundland Stores Account, and in a number of small miscellaneous accounts. An examination of each of these major accounts, and the amounts and profitability of each should serve to make more apparent which parts of their Newfoundland operations contributed to their success and whether or not this varied from time to time.

Their focal activity in Newfoundland, of course, had been for generations the export of fish and during the years of the late eighteenth century, despite fluctuations, those exports increased tremendously, as can be seen in the following graph.



The annual figures for the amount of fish shipped to market by the firm and its subsequent value at market are given in the following table.

TABLE 20

Newman's Fish Export, Value and Amount 1780-1800²

Year	Amount (Qtls.)	Value ³			Year	Amount (Qtls.)	Value ³		
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
1780	6,819	6,491	0	4	1790	17,393	12,348	10	7
1781	10,024	9,223	7	9	1791	22,340	18,136	15	5
1782	18,791	18,791	15	9	1792	17,375	15,711	13	3
1783	12,849	11,221	9	4	1793	17,480	16,422	15	1
1784	23,253	18,157	7	10	1794	26,688	23,280	17	4
1785	22,684	18,551	17	5	1795	16,533	21,122	9	9
1786	20,576	17,773	10	8	1796	19,543	22,755	11	11
1787	17,562	23,774	2	0	1797	18,057	17,740	17	6
1788	15,881	10,445	0	2	1798	21,152	19,393	19	3
1789	20,257	12,417	7	9	1799	25,211	21,745	2	5
					1800	29,053	22,026	6	4

²This table has been compiled from Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers for the years 1780-1796, 1796-1806, using the Cod Fish accounts, the various ships' accounts, and the accounts with the market correspondents. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

³The value indicated here is the value of the fish at market.

The overall expansion on fish exports can also be seen in the following table of average annual exports.

TABLE 21

Newman's Average Annual Exports⁴

1780 - 1784	14,194 quintals
1785 - 1789	19,393 quintals
1790 - 1794	20,255 quintals
1795 - 1799	20,099 quintals
1800 - 1805	27,018 quintals

Several things may be noted here. Despite the American War, by 1781 and 1782 Newman's were finding it possible to get increasingly larger amounts of fish off to market.

The confusion of affairs as the war ended in 1783 saw their exports decline, only to soar again in 1784. This was perhaps a combination of a full season of peace after years of war, plus the opening of a new establishment on the south coast of the island with its accompanying increase in operations and outlay. During this year the firm's new premises were responsible for about twenty percent of its whole production. This expansion seems to have taxed the firm's

⁴This table has been compiled from the figures in Table 20, with additional figures for amounts of fish for the years 1801-1805 coming from the Newman and Co. Ledger Book 1796-1806. Newman Book No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

resources and after the initial plunge into this new area the firm's volume of fish exports declined for four years, at a time when the economy was experiencing boom conditions. The opening of additional premises in 1793 seems to have been more cautious, and their total exports remained much as it had during the previous year. After a season of negligible growth in 1793 their exports suddenly soared to new heights not reached again until 1800. This coincided with the outbreak of a war with France, during which Newman's was evidently quite successful in marketing its fish. During the peace of Amiens their production dipped somewhat, only to rise again as the war resumed. Thus the outbreak of war or the declaration of peace is sometimes strangely reflected in the figures of the firm's exports. Newman's were obviously able to cope successfully with the conditions of wartime, in a way that many other firms were not. At a time when survivors in the trade found it necessary to dip into their resources, Newman's were making such profits that they were still investing profits from their current operations. It was with the return of open markets during peacetime that Newman's found themselves faced with more competition in Newfoundland and in the market areas.

The price obtained at the markets for each quintal of fish varied, of course, not only from season to season but also from cargo to cargo during a single season. This uncertainty was a very basic characteristic of the Newfoundland trade. The extreme variation in price per quintal as received by Newman's for the twenty years from

1780 to 1800 can be seen in the following table.

TABLE 22

Value Per Quintal at Market for Newman's Fish, 1780-1790⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Value</u>		<u>Year</u>	<u>Value</u>	
1780	19.0	shillings	1791	16.3	shillings
1781	18.4	"	1792	12.3	"
1782	20.9	"	1793	13.1	"
1783	17.5	"	1794	17.4	"
1784	11.3	"	1795	25.6	"
1785	16.4	"	1796	23.3	"
1786	17.3	"	1797	19.3	"
1787	27.0	"	1798	18.3	"
1788	13.2	"	1799	17.2	"
1789	12.2	"	1800	15.2	"
1790	14.2	"			

As the American War entered its second half, the price Newman's received for fish remained reasonably high. At the end of the war and the period immediately afterward the average price dropped considerably. As the situation clarified, prices rose rapidly, reaching an almost unbelievable height in 1787. By 1788 the firm was getting less per

⁵The figures here are necessarily somewhat rough, being obtained by dividing the value of fish at market (given in Table 20) by the number of quintals shipped to market (also given in Table 20).

quintal, the markets having been saturated with fish for several years in a row.⁶ The price rose again in 1791 with the bottoming out of the depression, and rose yet higher after the outbreak of war with France. The reduced amounts of fish reaching the markets during these years helped to sustain the price. Five year averages of the price received by Newman's for fish reveal the following figures:

1780 - 1784	17s. 5d. per quintal
1785 - 1789	17s. 3d. per quintal
1790 - 1794	14s. 8d. per quintal
1795 - 1800	19s. 10d. per quintal

It can be noted both in the figures given in Table 22 and in the average for 1795-1800 that, as the war with France continued, Newman's consistently received higher prices per quintal. This is also the period when the volume of their annual shipments was maintained at a considerably higher volume than at any time previous.⁷

Since the Newfoundland trade depended ultimately on the export of dried codfish, Newman's Cod Fish Account therefore contributed in great measure to the general well-being of the firm. The Cod Fish Account's Profit and Loss entries for years 1780-1806 are given in the following table.

⁶This has been covered in Chapter I, particularly pages 21 and 22.

⁷See Table 20, page 109.—

TABLE 23

Fish Account - Profit and Loss, 1780-1800⁸

Year	Profit or Loss			Year	Profit or Loss		
	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1780	1652	7	4	1791	1921	11	2 ³ / ₄
1781	1661	6	4 ¹ / ₂	1792	1451	13	6 ¹ / ₂
1782	2935	11	2 ¹ / ₂	1793	703	11	0
1783	239	8	3 (Loss)	1794	1482	9	8
1784	2882	7	7 ¹ / ₂	1795	3423	7	5
1785	865	18	10 (Loss)	1796	2193	1	0
1786	1206	15	6	1797	311	19	6
1787	754	12	4	1798	3321	3	5
1788	1765	0	4 ¹ / ₂	1799	106	1	8
1789	399	2	0 (Loss)	1800	-	-	-
1790	595	14	2				

During the twenty years, the Fish Account registered losses only four times, once in 1783 (when both amount and value had fallen), again in 1785 (when the volume declined only slightly, while the price per quintal had climbed)⁹ and twice more, during 1788 and 1789. In 1788

⁸The figures for this table have been taken from the Cod Fish Accounts in the Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4 Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

⁹This occurrence may perhaps be accounted for by the firm's paying a too high price for the fish in Newfoundland before shipping it to market.

volume had dropped, accompanied by a vast decline in price, while in the following year the firm made the mistake of increasing their volume, while the price declined still further. It can be noticed, both from the Profit/Loss situation of the Main Company in Table 19 and in the similar table for Cod Fish in Table 23, that during the years of peace occurred their only unprofitable operations. It can also be noticed that, generally, after the Fish Account registered a year of Losses, the main firm in the following year often registered a loss. This happened in 1784 (the Fish Account registered a loss in 1783); we have no figures for 1786 after the Fish Loss in 1785, but it is not unlikely; the Fish Account registered losses in 1788 and 1789 and the main firm registered losses during 1789 and 1790, with a smaller Loss in 1791. Like many other firms Newman's were hit by the drop of prices during the late 1780's, but unlike many others their losses were not fatal, and from 1790 to the end of the century their Fish Account experienced only profits. Though their profit realized on the Fish Account fluctuated widely during this last decade¹⁰ of the century, it was all profit, their best consecutive years being between 1794 and 1797.¹⁰

Besides the amount of codfish exported by the firm and the odd amounts of herring, green or core fish occasionally exported, Newman's also regularly exported Cod and Seal Oil.¹¹ Most of this oil was brought back to England on board the bankers for use in leather tanning and in

¹⁰ A more extensive discussion of the profit situation is given in the latter part of this chapter.

¹¹ See Table 24, page 116.

the manufacture of soap and candles. The profitability of this item depended upon the demand in England and the productivity of the Greenland whale industry.

TABLE 24

Cod and Seal Oil Production, 1780-1800¹²

Year	Amt. (casks)	Profit-Loss			Year	Amt. (casks)	Profit-Loss		
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
1780	57	3	5	1½	1791	106	127	1	9
1781	-	133	14	0	1792	115	180	19	9
1782	64	61	4	4 (Loss)	1793	196	51	0	5
1783	76	3	14	8½ (Loss)	1794	246	277	6	2
1784	78	108	10	2½	1795	212	292	17	5
1785)	159	375	9	1½ (Loss)	1796	-	690	19	6½
)	338								
1787)	255	251	4	2½ (Loss)	1797	-	296	11	4
)	271								
1789)	-	85	6	9½ (Loss)	1798	466	31	5	5 (Loss)
)	116								
1790)	116				1799	425	238	8	9
					1800	504	850	14	10

¹²The figures for the amount of cod and seal oil were compiled from the Cod and Seal Oil Accounts in the Company Ledgers, and from the various ships' and correspondents' accounts. The Profit-Loss entries are all from the Cod and Seal Oil Ledger Accounts. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

The above table gives a rough idea of the increased handling of these oils by the firm, the production of the 1800 season being almost ten times that of 1780. During the first decade of this period the Oil Account made considerable losses. However, by the 1790's it became much more dependable as a profitable item and by the end of the period its profitability increased substantially. Somewhat similar to the Cod Fish Account, the Cod Oil Account showed good consecutive returns for the years 1794-1797. During 1797 the Cod Oil Account cleared almost as much profit as did the Cod Fish Account, and in 1799 it registered a profit over twice as high as the usually much more predominant Cod Fish Account.

Another aspect of the firm's Newfoundland affairs was their growing supply trade. Supplies brought in by the firm would be issued, not only to their own employees, but also to resident fishermen, for as the period progressed, most of the fish collected by the firm's agents would seem to have been obtained from them. The increased handling of provisions and supplies as an integral part of their trade can be seen in Table 25, page 119. The value of supplies as given in the table is the total purchase price in the country of origin for for all cargoes coming into Newman's Newfoundland Stores for the given year. From the table it can be seen that as the American War entered its latter stages, the firm was substantially increasing its involvement with the supply trade and hence with bartering supplies and provisions with the residents in return for fish and oil. The year 1784 was one of heavy expansion in the supply trade, being tied into the move to

the south coast. Their entry into the fishery of the St. Lawrence seems to have been somewhat excessive, and even through the boom years they reduced their volume of supplies. While this might be seen in part as a reversion to direct fishing on their own account, and less interest in the supply trade, they nevertheless experienced a general reduction as well in the amount of fish they handled.¹³ After a bad year in 1791 the firm's supply trade again expanded with minor fluctuations until the end of the century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the value of the supply trade dropped somewhat, only to show strong signs of recovery in 1805. (See Table 25).

Any profits on the supply trade would appear in the firm's reckoning of the "Newfoundland Stores Account". Here, goods purchased abroad were charged at cost to the Newfoundland Stores Account, costs relating to supplies (salaries, transportation, etc.) were charged and the fish obtained in return for these supplies were credited at the going price per quintal in Newfoundland before being transferred to the Cod Fish Account. In this way, the Profit-Loss entries for the Newfoundland Stores Account reflect the profit or loss on supplies bartered for fish. Table 26 gives the Profit-Loss entries for the Newfoundland Stores Account up to the end of the century.

¹³See Table 20, page 109.

TABLE 25

Value of Supplies Handled by Newman's 1780-1805

<u>Year</u>	<u>Value</u>			<u>Year</u>	<u>Value</u>		
	s.	d.		s.	d.		
1780	2,233	18	1	1793	9,186	12	9
1781	4,261	12	3	1794	12,468	18	3
1782	5,256	8	8	1795	8,444	10	6
1783	5,459	6	1	1796	13,593	1	4
1784	8,934	12	2	1797	10,645	3	2
1785	8,444	17	8	1798	10,980	12	11
1786	6,082	10	2	1799	17,272	5	5
1787	6,342	1	10	1800	20,172	4	9
1788	5,908	14	2	1801	18,675	1	19
1789	5,477	3	2	1802	11,581	17	9
1790	6,074	7	10	1803	12,939	8	7
1791	4,904	6	2	1804	12,151	9	7
1792	6,434	4	10	1805	21,737	4	6

¹⁴This is the cost of goods as purchased by Newman's for use or resale in Newfoundland. The figures have been compiled from the cost values of incoming cargoes in the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, Robert Newman and Company Ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

TABLE 26

Profit-Loss entries for the Newfoundland Stores' Account 1780-1800¹⁵

Year	Profit-Loss			Year	Profit-Loss		
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
1780	1,068	4	½	1790	669	11	8
1781	238	9	8	1791	307	16	9½
1782	1,383	19	5	1792	2,980	0	1¾
1783	6,533	7	4	1793	3,712	4	4½
1784	*			1794	4,221	1	4
1785	4,621	16	9¾	1795	2,217	12	7½
1786	1,764	3	5½	1796	3,838	16	5
1787	1,722	11	3	1797	2,088	16	7¾
1788	408	17	1	1798	4,944	0	5
1789	58	7	2	1799	4,944	0	5
				1800	4,153	5	3½

* The figures for this year were unavailable.

¹⁵These have been taken from the Newfoundland Stores' Account in the Company Ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10 Reels E4 and E5.

The Profit/Loss situation for the Newfoundland Stores Account again reflects much the same as the earlier figures. During the American War years the firm did quite well. Confusion reigned in 1784, so much so that I had difficulty getting the necessary figures. After 1785, when theoretically the whole of the Newfoundland trade was booming, Newman's did only reasonably well. During 1785, 1787 and 1788, the company as a whole made a profit. About half the profits of 1785 came from the Newfoundland Stores Account, that account again being profitable in 1786. However, the Newfoundland Stores Account registered a £1700 loss in 1787, and made very low profits from then until 1792. Then, with the end of the depression and the coming of war with France after 1793 the Newfoundland Stores continued to register good profits right through to the end of the decade. This is the same period that the company as a whole was so successful. The relative prosperity of the supply trade over the twenty years can be seen in the following averaged profits:

1780-1783	£ 2306 (American War years)
1785-1791	£ 785 (boom and depression years)
1792-1800	£3678 (mostly years at war with France)

In an effort to compare the profitability of Newman's involvement with the Fish trade itself to the profitability of their involvement with the supply trade, the following table has been worked out. For the figures for the Fish investments, the net profit for each year, as given in Table 23, page 114 has been subtracted from the net proceeds

of the fish for that year, to indicate the firm's outlay in fish for that year. Finally, the year's profit on fish was expressed as a percentage of this outlay. The figures for fish given in the table below are these percentages. For the supply trade figures, I have taken the profits registered by the firm for the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, and expressed them as percentages of the total purchase price for the goods coming in to the Newfoundland Stores. These are the figures given in the table below for the supply trade.

TABLE 27

Rate of Return on Money Invested by Newman's 1780-1800

<u>Year</u>	<u>% on Fish</u>	<u>% on Supplies</u>
1780	34.1	47.8
1781	22.0	5.6
1782	18.5	26.3
1783	2.1 (loss)	119.7
1784	18.9	*
1785	4.9	54.7
1786	7.3	29
1787	3.3	27.17 (loss)
1788	16.9 (loss)	6.9
1789	3.2 (loss)	1.1
1790	5.1	11.0
1791	11.9	6.28 (loss)
1792	10.2	46.3
1793	4.5	44.0
1794	6.8	33.9
1795	19.3	26.3
1796	10.6	28.2
1797	1.8	19.6
1798	20.6	45.0
1799	0.5	28.6
1800		20.6

In looking at the percentages on fish, one can see that during the years of the American Revolutionary War, the returns were quite high. In comparison, during the boom years the percentages are much lower, with a considerable rate of loss

In 1788 and again a loss, though at a less serious rate, in 1789. Generally, in most of the firm's figures the decade of the 1790's had proved to be much more successful than that of the 1780's. If one ignores the years from 1780-1782, this is again reflected in the percentages realized on fish, after a high of roughly 24.86 percent from 1780 to 1782, during the remaining years of the 1780's the average rate of return is a mere 1.74 percent. In contrast, during the 1790's the average rate percentage of the returns on fish is 9.13 percent, and broken down into five year averages, the late 1790's proves to be higher at 10.56 percent compared to 7.76 percent from 1790 to 1794.

In the following century the firm would admonish their Newfoundland agents to remember that money lost on fish must be recovered on supplies.¹⁶ Keeping this in mind, it becomes important to examine the rate of return of supplies during this period of transition. During the 1780-1782 years the return on supplies averages roughly about the same as on fish, being 26.57 percent compared to 24.86 percent. It can be seen, however, from the preceding table that these returns, although a little better, were also much more widely fluctuating. During the last year of the war, when the fish account was experiencing a loss, the return on supplies was an

¹⁶See for example a letter to Newman & Co., Newfoundland, Jan. 16, 1857. "Fish, nine times out of ten, leaves a positive loss at market!" Also, a letter to the same, July 29, 1857. "We fear the September 15th. prices at St. John's for fish may be excessively high; but we are satisfied to be guided by them - looking to your prices for supplies for our remuneration." Newman Book No. 41/64, Reel E19.

enormous 119.7 percent, its highest ever. Before the boom really began to gather intensity, the firm did quite well in its returns on supplies. The difficulties of the late boom period resulted in the worst averages ever for the supply trade, their two years of losses coming in 1787, and 1791. For the years in between (1788-1790) the rate of return on supplies averaged a mere 6.3 percent. In comparison with the fish returns, over the years 1783-1790 the fish account gave returns at 1.74 percent, while the supplies account gave returns of 37.07 percent, much of that accounted for by the single season of 1783. During the extremity of the depression in 1791 the firm realized a loss on their supplies account. In spite of this inauspicious start to the 1790's, the firm did consistently well in their returns on supplies for the rest of the decade, and averaged a return of 31.80 percent. This is, it is true, somewhat lower than the overall average for the rate of returns on supplies for the 1783-1790 period, but it is of great significance that the returns for each year were consistent, while for the earlier period there had been two years of losses, years of very low returns, and one year of fantastically high returns to distort the picture. There does seem to be little difference in the rate of return on supplies during the early years of the 1790's compared to the latter half of the decade.

It has proved impossible to calculate the rate of return on the individual items which together made up the supply trade. However, in an effort to give an in-depth view of at least one of the commodities in which the firm dealt, some examination has been made of the wine

trade. Because of their need for a return cargo on the voyage back to England from the fish markets, the firm of Robert Newman and Company acted as Importers into Britain of Continental goods, most notably salt, for commercial use in the fishery, and wines for consumption at home and for re-exportation to Newfoundland and the North American mainland. It is for their connections with the Portuguese wine trade that the firm is perhaps most popularly known today, and it is this aspect of their traditional trade which has survived to the present.

The Holdsworth and Newman families, in the early years of the eighteenth century, dominated the overseas trade of Dartmouth and took part in the production and shipment of wine from Portugal to England. Although the firm of Robert Newman and Company maintained commercial correspondents in most of the major ports of both North America and Continental Europe, their firmest connections were with the related firm of Newman and Land of Oporto and Viana, Portugal. The brothers who formed the firm of John Newman and Company, and the subsequent firm of Robert Newman and Company, had throughout this period another brother Thomas, as one of the major partners of the Portuguese end of the family's business affairs.¹⁷ The Portuguese firm (Newman and Land) had its origins in the firm of Holdsworth, Olive, and Newman of Oporto which had been formed in 1735.¹⁸ Thus the partners of Robert Newman and

¹⁷Thomas Newman Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹⁸The Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Company, pp.11-12.

Company expected and received what amounted to preferential treatment at the lodges of Newman and Land, both for the sale of cargoes of Newfoundland fish and in the provision of quality wines to be shipped to the firm in England.

The ports of Oporto and Viana on the Douro River, north of Lisbon, were the focus of Newman's involvements with Portugal both for fish sales and for the purchase of wines. Historically, Viana had an ancient connection with the Newfoundland fishery in its own right, having been a base for Portuguese fishing voyages to Newfoundland as early as 1506.¹⁹ A connection between that area and the West Country had been made as early as 1654,²⁰ and at Oporto a large colony of wine merchants and shippers carried on a business which doubled the prosperity of what was the second city in the kingdom of Portugal. (Trade with Portugal was greatly stimulated by the famous Methuen Treaty of 1703, by which Portuguese wines were permitted to enter England at a lower rate of duty than those of France or Germany, in return for a similar concession on English manufactured goods entering Portugal.²¹)

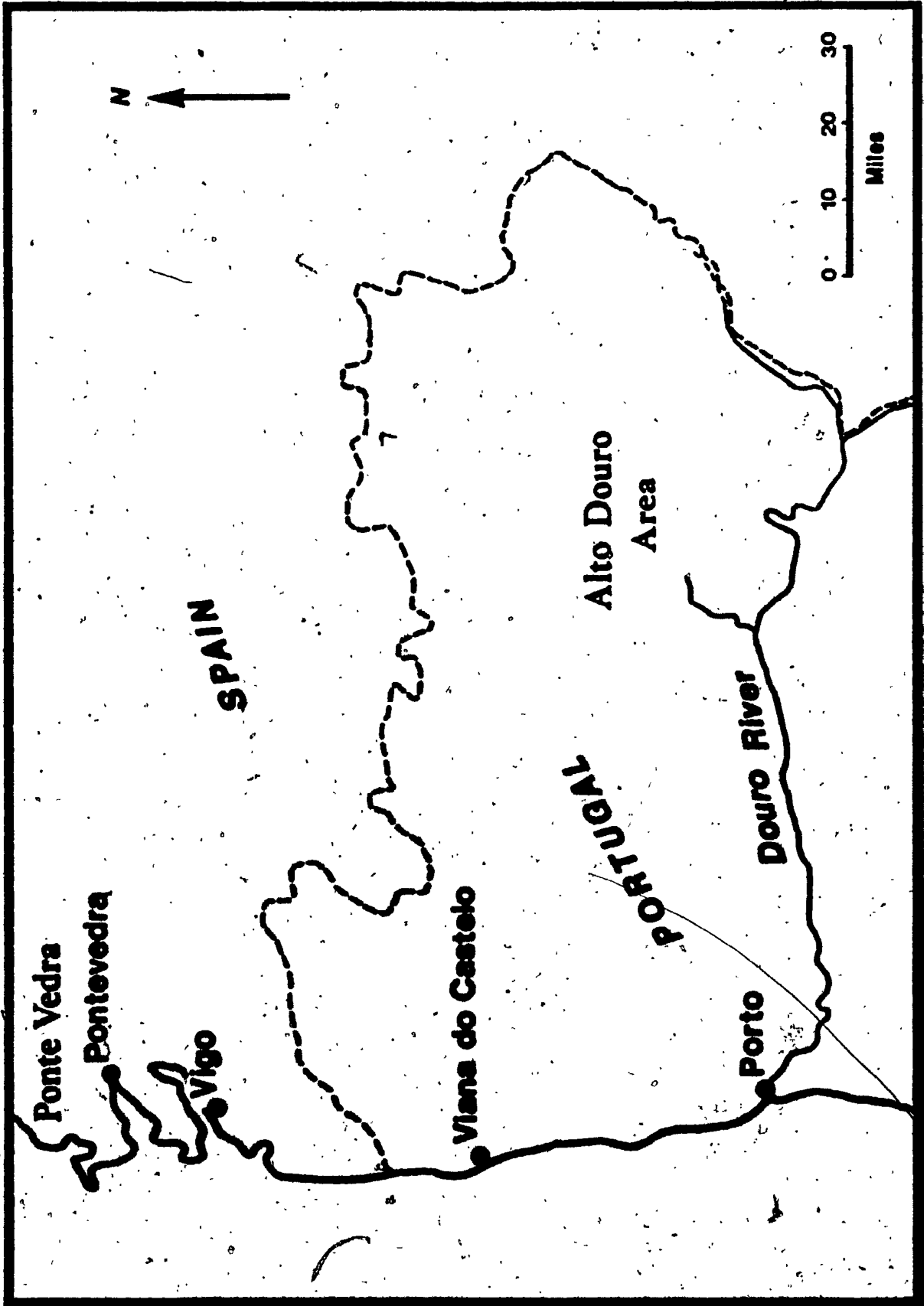
¹⁹ H.A. Innis, The Cod Fisheries (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1954), pp. 14-15.

²⁰ P. Russell, Dartmouth, p. 84.

²¹ H.M. Stephens, The Story of Portugal, (New York, AMS Press), p. 338.

A.D. Francis, The Wine Trade (London, Adam & Charles Black, 1972), p. 106.

THE ALTO DOURO AREA OF PORTUGAL



Map No 5

In the letters of Robert Newman and Company to Newman and Land, their Portuguese suppliers and correspondents, to their English customers and to their Newfoundland agents are revealed many of the factors which affected the volume of wine which they ordered annually. Estimates had to be made of what the following season would be like in Newfoundland, and what the military state of Europe would be.²² They had to take a chance on what quality wines would be available when their orders were being filled,²³ and they had to chance the unexpected availability of lower price wines from captured foreign vessels. Another factor was the timing of the arrivals of their vessels.²⁴ If their own ships did not arrive in time, just as the wines were ready to be shipped off, they could face freight rates which, if high enough, could cut into their profit margin heavily. On the other hand, the advantageous arrival of one of their vessels could result in revenue from additional freight on wines destined for other purchasers in Guernsey, Plymouth, etc.²⁵ An additional consideration was the need to insure cargoes of wine coming in from Portugal,²⁶ the rates at times seriously cutting down profitability.

²² Letter to Newman and Land, Porto, Jan. 25, 1799. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²³ Letter to Newman, Land and Hunt, October 19, 1798 and a letter to Newman, Land, Oporto, Jan. 25, 1799. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²⁴ Letter from Newman, Land, November 29, 1792. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²⁵ Letter from Newman, Land, December 15, 1792. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

²⁶ *ibid.*

Generally, however, these factors had their main effect on the quantity of wines shipped and not on the decisions of whether or not to import Portuguese wines each year.

In the actual handling of their wines the firm found that they required an exceptional amount of care in stowing and unloading. When they had been fortunate enough to get wines to take on, freight for others, their vessels would make preliminary calls at the designated ports before returning to Dartmouth where the bulk of the firm's own wines was to be landed.²⁷ Lesser shipments were sometimes made on behalf of the firm to other ports in England, such as Plymouth and London, where the firm made use of a local broker. The services of such men varied in quality and the firm sometimes discovered that the charges attending to a cargo of wine were rather directly proportional to which broker was employed.²⁸ In this vein also, the firm seemed to find that the charges at London were rather higher than at the outports.

The wine trade followed a fairly regular pattern from year to year. As the firm described it to one customer, "... our trade is chiefly for exportation, having yearly a cargo..."²⁹ This yearly cargo was ordered late in the preceding year (around November), the bulk of the cargo being intended for shipment to Newfoundland and in somewhat later years, to the ports of North America, especially to Quebec.³⁰ In Newfoundland the firm demanded of their agents that they

²⁷ ibid.

²⁸ Robert Newman and Co. letter to P. Symons, Plymouth, August 7, 1797. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁹ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Richard Fills, March 12, 1795. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

³⁰ Robert Newman & Co. letter to John Congdon, April 20, 1797. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

maintain their control of the market for wines by never allowing themselves to be undersold in the item, regardless of any loss involved.²⁵ Their Newfoundland agents were also advised to make the most of any superior quality wine which might be shipped to them, by issuing it to only persons who could appreciate the difference, and to those whom they wished to favour.²⁶ In Newfoundland the wine might be sold in fairly large quantities to individuals, or it might be issued as part of the supply trade to dealers with the firm. Most of the wine seems to have been disposed of at St. John's rather than to the Westward, as the establishments on the South coast were known.²⁷

Besides ordering the bulk of their wines for re-exportation, the firm also catered to the domestic English market. The firm had standard terms on which this part of the trade was to be conducted. Private gentlemen as well as commercial were free to order through them,

²⁵ Robert Newman and Co. letter to John Congdon, Sept. 12, 1805 "Remember, you are not to be undersold..." Also, March 15, 1805 "You can sell cheap as any person or under..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁶ Robert Newman and Co. letter to John Congdon, March 20, 1805. "if you have any particular people to oblige, the sooner they take it (quality wines) the better; it is a pity to give it to people who make no difference as to quality..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁷ This generalization is based on the Newfoundland Stores Account for St. John's as compared to the Stores Account for the westward premises. Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

getting their wines at the same prices, there being but one advantage given to commercial retailers.

The price as quoted to private gentlemen was considered as payable at the end of one month ('ready money') while at the same price a commercial gentleman might pay for his wines at the end of six months, or if he preferred to pay 'ready money' he was to be given a 2½ percent discount.²⁸ One other regulation which affected individual purchasers rather than retailers was that wines could not be ordered in quantities of less than half a hogshead.²⁹ When Newman's had taken orders for others they were informed by the firm of the date of shipment from Portugal so that the respective owners could insure their portions of the cargo.

Basically, the firm depended upon the known quality of wines produced in the Oporto area to recommend them to purchasers. At times, however, especially when the trade grew slack, the firm actively solicited new customers among men with an established interest in the liquor trade. To further this widening of their domestic market for Portuguese wines Robert Newman and Company recommended to their Portuguese suppliers the names of several established businessmen whom the Dartmouth firm thought were developing into major wine sellers.³⁰

²⁸ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Joseph Gribble, Ashburton, April 8, 1806. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

²⁹ Robert Newman and Co. letter to William Mortimer, April 14, 1806. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

³⁰ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Newman Land, Oporto, August 17, 1798. "You will also ship two pipes for Mr. Rd. Cargurven, Newman Books No. 22/38, Reel E9.

To complement this effort the potential customer was written to and informed of the advantageous trade which could result from selling Portuguese wines of high quality.³¹

Figures on Newman's wine trade were not readily available, but some idea of how the trade fared during the late eighteenth century can be seen in the Company's correspondence. By the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, the prosperity experienced in the Newfoundland fishery was also being experienced in the British colony in Portugal which handled fish sales and wine production. The number of resident British merchant houses in the ports of Viana and Oporto was relatively high, there being 39 in Oporto in 1769, and 6 in the smaller port of Viana before 1775.³² A number of factors combined to bring the wine trade and those involved into some decline. Some of the merchants involved died, there were abuses in the establishment of wine companies, and the very high amount of capital necessary kept down the number of new replacements.³³ Adding to this was the outbreak of the American War in 1775. During the years of the war, the British carrying trade between England and Portugal was taken up by the Portuguese themselves.³⁴ Very few ships came to Viana since the Navy ships refused

Plymouth. He keeps the Pope's Head Inn in great business and will in a few years we think get into the wine trade exclusive of his house and be a valuable correspondent..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

³¹ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Rowley and Leach, London, Sept. 7, 1796. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

³² B.T. 6.63, Jan, 31, 1786.

³³ B.T. 6.63, Jan. 31, 1786.

³⁴ B.T. 6.63, May 31, 1786.

to accompany them to the bar there and the capture of the vessel Lockhart discouraged others from being sent.³⁵ During the latter years of the war, 1780-1783, it was later claimed at an inquiry, not a single ship had arrived from Newfoundland. The resident British houses were badly hit. In Oporto where there had been 39 houses long before the war there were now only 26, and at Viana where there had been 6 resident houses, there were then only 2, another three being only seasonal.³⁶ The latter were attended only during the autumn and winter when the greatest number of ships normally came in from Newfoundland. The decline seems to have continued for some time after the war, for in 1784 the number of resident merchants in Oporto had fallen still further to 20, there being only one new firm two years later.³⁷ Among the firms operating from Viana and Oporto at this time were the firms of Newman and Land, and Holdsworth, Olive and Newman.

During the 1790's Robert Newman and Company annually ordered wine from their contacts in Portugal, their involvement being regular and substantial. The outbreak of the war with France in 1793, and the restrictions imposed thereafter by the British government as well as the rising costs of insurance and freight hit the import-export trade in wines. Normally the wine intended for exportation was not subject to

³⁵B.T. 6.63, May 31, 1786.

³⁶B.T. 6.63, May 31, 1786.

³⁷B.T. 6.63, Jan. 31, 1786.

duty in England but in 1795-6 Pitt and the Parliament hit the importers with duties on all wine stocks in England, including those intended for re-exportation.³⁸ This induced them to supply more heavily the local market in England. In addition they actively sought new customers both in England and in Quebec.³⁹ This latter market, although it grew gradually, did achieve some degree of success and worked its way into the yearly cycle of their Newfoundland affairs. Having turned to the domestic market to compensate for a decline in their exports the firm found to their dismay that in the following year (1796) Parliament issued additional duties on wines which they felt would drastically cut down the domestic consumption.⁴⁰ The wine trade continued to suffer during the years of the war and during the early years of the nineteenth century the Dartmouth merchants seem to have been overshadowed by those at Poole.⁴¹ However, although Newman's was tempted at times to quit

³⁸ Robert Newman and Co. letter to M. Hart, Newton, 19th April, 1796 "yesterday the Excise officers without least hint that all wine stocks in England would be subject to any new duties that might be put on during present session of Parliament..." Also letter to Mr. Tarrent, April 11, 1796. "We shall send out more [wine] than intended because another duty will be laid on all wine consumed in England..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

³⁹ For example, see Robert Newman and Co. letter to their agent John Congdon, April 20, 1797 "... send half a dozen hogsheds to Quebec and inform the house that if we found the article to answer by paying freight and insurance we should annually ship them a quantity..." Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

⁴⁰ Robert Newman and Co. letter to M. Hart, 22 April, 1796. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

⁴¹ Newman's write to Poole for advice on aspects of the wine trade, legalities, etc. There also seems to be a different Poole gauge for wine.

this part of the trade, it proved in the end to be invaluable and indeed the most durable aspect of their trading enterprises.⁴²

So far in this chapter, we have looked at the Profit/Loss situation for the main firm, and at the major accounts directly related to their Newfoundland operations which contributed to these figures. These were the Cod Fish Account, the Cod and Seal Oil Account, their Newfoundland Stores Account for their supply trade, with finally, an elaboration on wine as one of the commodities in which they dealt. These, of course, were not the only accounts of great importance to the firm's overall well-being. One of the major contributors to the Profit/Loss situation for each year was the firm's fleet. There is, however, some difficulty in tabulating profit/loss figures for the ships as a group. Most of the ships have separate accounts, which cover the life duration of the particular ship only. This can be partially overcome by summing up all the profits and losses for each year for all the ships in the ledgers. This has in effect been done in the following table, where all profit/loss entries for shipping for any year that could be found in the accounts of individual ships have been brought together. However, it is essential to realize in viewing

⁴²The firm of Newman, Hunt & Co. of London are still connected with the Portuguese wine trade, although they have long since dropped out of the Newfoundland fishery.

TABLE 28

Profit-Loss Figures Available on Some of Newman's Ships 1780-1800⁴³

Year	No. of ships* on the books	No. of ships showing Profit	Loss	Total Profit			Total Loss		
				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1780	3		1	340	17	9½			
1781	5	1	2	448	16	3			
1782	7	3	4	198	10	7½			
1783	9	3	1	122	2	8			
1784	10	6	3	1148	1	3½			
1785	10	6	2	710	4	7½			
1786	10	*							
1787	9	3	6		153	11	5		
1788	9	5	4	366	12	9			
1789	7	4	2	66	12	4½			
1790	7	1	6		1063	16	6		
1791	8	1	6		718	4	2		
1792	11	4	6	311	2	2			
1793	11	1	9		1212	5	5½		
1794	11	5	6	414	6	3			
1795	10	8	1	2356	2	0			
1796	10	4	4	513	12	10			
1797	8	2	8		1887	15	9		
1798	6	2	4		1038	3	11½		
1799	8	2	7		1343	9	11½		
1800	9	4	8		927	13	11½		

* This is the number of vessels I was able to identify, either from the Accounts of the individual ships or in Lloyd's Registry of Shipping. In 3 instances, 1797, 1799 and 1800 this total is less than the number of vessels for which a profit or loss was registered. This could happen in a number of ways. Accounts might begin a year before or end a year or so after a ship actually functioned. It also happened that a ship was sometimes carried in the Lloyd's Registry for some time after it had ceased to operate.

⁴³ This table was constructed from the various ships' accounts in the firm's ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5. They are not complete since all ships do not register Profit-Loss entries each year.

the preceding table that the accounts of all ships are not necessarily run off to a profit/loss conclusion for each year. Therefore, it is important to realize that the table will refer to the profit/loss situation only for ships whose accounts were concluded in this manner for that year. For example, in the figures of 1792, I have been able to find ten ships, four of whom have profit entries, and six with loss entries. These profits and losses have a net profit of £311 2s. 2d.

From the figures given in the preceding table, as far as can be seen during the latter years of the American War the firm's fleet was running at a loss. In spite of this, the main firm was registering profits, resting heavily on the profits of the Cod Fish Account, and the Newfoundland Stores Account for supplies. On the other hand, for most of the remaining years of the 1780's the fleet registered a modest profit. It did register a loss in 1787, as did the Newfoundland Stores Account. Very generally speaking, since the table cannot be thought to be adequate, during the 1790's (unlike most other aspects of the firm) the fleet cleared reasonable profits during the early years but did quite poorly during the years from 1797 until the end of the century. Looking at the number of ships identified as having made profits and losses, we can see that in 1793 nine ships made a loss compared to one with a profit. In the years from 1797 to 1800 more ships made losses than profits.

To supplement the preceding table, I have also included the only group account for any of the firm's shipping, the Shallop's Account. Fortunately, Profit/Loss entries are available for this account and the figures thus arrived at are placed in the following table.

TABLE 29

Shallops* Account Profit and Loss 1787-1800⁴⁴

<u>Year</u>	<u>Profit</u>			<u>Loss</u>		
	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
1787	567	15	11			
1788	104	1	7			
1789				300	0	0
1790				257	3	11
1791	551	0	7			
1792				111	6	0
1793				362	1	2
1794				439	8	11
1795				931	14	7
1796	142	6	7			
1797				361	9	8½
1798				1063	13	4½
1799				1074	1	0
1800				829	6	1

* A Shallop is a small open boat used in the inshore fishery

⁴⁴These figures come from the firm's ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

Unfortunately, I do not have the figures for the years before 1787. However, from the figures given the shallops would seem to have been reasonably profitable in the years after the end of the American War. It seems most clear that the depression period which hit around 1789 spelled the absolute ruin of the shallops as a profitable venture. In the years from 1789 until 1800, they register only two years of profits, compared to ten years of very substantial losses.

In a final attempt to assess the profitability of this major part of Newman's operations I have decided to take a number of the more durable ships for which Profit/Loss entries are available for a number of consecutive years to see what patterns can be observed, to see the ship in question as a profitable or losing venture over the years of its service. The two vessels which span most of the time period under study are the Brig Dispatch and the Brig Sturdy Beggar - eventually renamed the Siren.

The Sturdy Beggar seems to have been bought in Newfoundland late in 1781 for £1105, roughly a 100 ton ship, with a crew of eleven. During 1783 she was renamed the Siren, or Syren, and under this name she continued in service to the firm until around 1800 when she was lost between Lisbon and Porto. The following profit/loss entries are available.

TABLE 31

Profit by Months/Year Profit/Loss 1782-1800⁴⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Profit</u>			<u>Loss</u>		
	<u>£</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
1782	164	4	11			
1783				120	15	0
1784				157	12	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
1785	402	19	6 $\frac{1}{2}$			
1787	346	9	2			
1788	158	8	9 $\frac{1}{2}$			
1789				20	4	7
1790				1	7	0 3
1791				179	16	1
1792	171	0	1			
1793				28	1	3
1794				49	6	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
1795	638	2	8			
1796	323	18	4 $\frac{3}{4}$			
1797	277	15	2			
1798				51	9	10
1799				251	7	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
1800				398	0	0 (on freight)

⁴⁵ These figures come from this ship's account in the firm's ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

From the above figures we can see that this ship suffered losses at the end of the American War, and during the depression period. Then during the 1790's, in the same pattern as the figures for the combined ships' profit/losses, this ship does reasonably well during the initial years of the war with France, but registers losses for the remaining years of the decade.

The Brig Dispatch, the second illustration of shipping during this period, was bought in January of 1783 at Portsmouth at a cost of £600. She also seems to have been about 100 tons, with a seven to nine-man crew. During her life with the firm, until 1796 (when she was sold, along with materials, to a D. Ryan), the ship suffered damages a number of times. She was damaged in 1784, again in 1787, and again in 1795. By 1790, her value had dropped from £600 to £500, and continued to drop, to £450 in 1791, to £400 in 1794, to a low of £350 in 1795. The following Profit/Loss entries are available. (Table 31).

From Table 31 it can be seen that the Dispatch was much less profitable than was the Sturdy Beggar/Syren. In fact, from among the figures available, only two profitable years are shown, and these are quite insubstantial.

It is difficult to generalize on the profitability of the Newman ships. But we have seen that the 1780's seem to have been more profitable than the latter decade, and especially during the last few years of the 1790's all parts of the fleet did very poorly, in spite of which, it must be remembered, the firm as a whole was doing fantastically well. It may be that the losses suffered on their ships' account were

TABLE 31

Brig Dispatch Profit/Loss 1783-1797⁴⁶

<u>Year</u>	<u>Profit</u>			<u>Loss</u>		
	<u>£</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
1783				17	16	3
1784				573	7	6½
1785				262	12	11
1788				175	16	10½
1789	39	18	1			
1790				226	15	7
1791				78	0	2
1792				109	3	11½
1793				306	8	0½
1794				193	14	4
1795	154	10	7			
1798				131	10	7

⁴⁶The figures come from the Dispatch's account in the firm's ledgers. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

necessary evils, for the affairs of the firm certainly could not be conducted without the fleet. We have also seen, as a sidenote, that after the depression of 1789, the shallops used in Newfoundland seem never again to offer much chance of being profitable.

In a final attempt to see what the firm did and how it prospered or lost during the period under study, it remains to examine some of the firm's financial accounts, their Exchange Account, their Interest Account, and a few minor accounts also relating to their finances.

When the firm sold fish in the markets of Continental Europe, especially in Portugal, their remittances came in the form of foreign currency which had to be exchanged and converted into British sterling. An astute businessman was able to turn a profit on this exchange. The following Profit/Loss entries are available for the Newman Exchange Account (Table 32).

The Newman firm, since the time of John Newman and Co. seldom had losses on their exchange account, as can be seen in the following table. As John Newman and Co. was dissolving, and during the early years of the firm of Robert Newman and Co., the firm made in 1780 a considerable loss and for four years negligible profits. By 1787, a year during which the Newfoundland Stores Account made a loss, the Exchange Account registered a profit almost equal to that on the Cod Fish Account. While this account was never a consistently large profit maker, it did well during the depression years of 1791-1792 and again during the war years of 1795, 1796, and 1800.

TABLE 32

Profit/Loss on Exchange Account 1776-1800⁴⁷

<u>Year</u>	<u>Profit</u>			<u>Loss</u>		
	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
1776	33	4	9			
1777	*					
1778	72	12	0			
1779	42	15	4			
1780				192	8	3½
1781	6	6	7			
1782	12	10	6			
1783	8	1	0			
1784	0	6	7			
1785	*					
1786	*					
1787	517	6	2½			
1788	51	19	4			
1789	70	3	0			
1790	63	3	10½			
1791	183	19	11			
1792	106	13	6½			
1793	93	0	5¾			
1794	0	17	7½			
1795	141	6	4			
1796	186	13	7½			
1797	*					
1798				2	13	1
1799	12	16	10½			
1800	284	0	2½			

* Figures for these years are not available.

⁴⁷These figures have come from the firm's ledgers. Newman Books No. 6/9, Reel E2; No. 8/4, Reel E3; and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

The other financial account of great interest, for which Profit and Loss figures are available, is the Interest Account. To the account was debited all interest the firm was obliged to pay out to others, while to its credit came interest owed to the firm by others. The available Profit and Loss figures for Newman's Interest Account are given in Table 33.

There are several definite trends which can be seen in this table. One is that while the family was operating in Newfoundland under the firm of John Newman and Co., the Interest Account was initially successful, registering low losses as the war with America continued. That the firm was in need of financial assistance can be seen in an entry of interest owed to outside investors and to additional moneys invested by the firm's main partner, John Newman, and in the firm making a loss on their main account.

With the reformation of the family firm into Robert Newman and Co. the firm had an initial two years of profit. However, as the war came to a close and until 1787 the firm found that the amount of interest it was obliged to pay out for the use of money was greater than the amounts paid to it by others, and the firm registered losses in their interest account. There was an end to this situation in 1788, and, with but one exception, from 1788 until the end of the century the firm consistently made a substantial profit on their interest account. The one exception was the year 1795 when the firm registered a loss of £554/9/7, almost all of which was paid to the assignees of their bankrupt brother, Holdsworth Newman. This payment to his creditors would

TABLE 33

Interest Account Profit/Loss 1776-1800⁴⁸

Year	Profit			Loss		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1776	53	17	2 $\frac{3}{4}$			
1777	10	10	10			
1778				2	9	11
1779				5	0	0
1780	39	16	8			
1781	13	15	9			
1782				11	18	8
1783				104	14	8
1784				76	0	11
1785				95	15	10
1786		*			*	
1787				328	7	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
1788	78	18	8			
1789	102	5	2			
1790	152	14	2			
1791	205	4	5			
1792	189	3	3			
1793	354	19	8			
1794	132	16	11			
1795				554	9	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ (most owed to assigns of Holdsworth Newman)
1796	385	8	8			
1797	232	18	5 $\frac{1}{2}$			
1798	649	8	11			
1799	655	19	6			
1800	541	15	1			

⁴⁸ These figures came from the ledgers of the Newman firms, John Newman & Co. 1776-1781, and Robert Newman & Co. 1780-1796, 1796-1806. Newman Books Nos. 6/9, Reel E2; 8/4, Reel E3; 9/11, Reels E4 and E5.

appear to be a brotherly gesture on their part, for they seem to have had no real connections with Holdsworth's business affairs. For the same year there is an interesting entry debiting the Interest Account £105 to Thomas Newman for loss on stock.

A careful look at some of the other entries besides the Profit and Loss can be very revealing. One thing which can be noticed is that from as early as 1789 and as late as 1805, which is really the end of the ledger under study, the firm pays interest on an investment of money by, first, Rebecca Cornwall, and, presumably at her death, to Richard Cornwall. This was almost always a £5 payment of interest which, at the rate that other accounts are listed, probably represented an investment of about £150.

The debit entries also give some evidence of when the firm owed large amounts of interest for money borrowed, and the sources of such money. The Interest Account for 1780 shows that the firm paid interest to Baring and Co., Exeter bankers (probably on about £400); to one of their captains, John Parr (probably on £150); and the largest amount to George Goodridge, a farmer/shopkeeper (probably on about £550). As early as 1777 John Newman and Co. had relied on George Goodridge for financial assistance, paying a 3 percent interest rate on an amount of £400. By 1783 that amount had expanded considerably, and the firm now paid to Sarah Goodridge a sum of £50 annually, probably on an amount of around £1600. This amount of interest was paid yearly until 1785 when the amount was increased, the investment having probably climbed to about £2400. In spite of this representing an increase in money borrowed

at interest, the firm during the same period owed even more to Olive, Cutler, and Co., London Bankers and Commission Agents, the amounts representing roughly £2670 in 1783, even more during 1784 (£3600), and a somewhat reduced amount (£2130) in 1785. These seem to have been Newman's largest sources of borrowed money. There appears to be some change in 1785. While the amount of interest paid out, and, one assumes, the amount on which interest was being paid, remained the same as the year before, the amount borrowed from Olive's was reduced and the difference spread among other investors, among them John Page and Son, of Portugal (about £500), and William Newcomin (about £1000).

In the interval of the years 1786-1788 the firm continued to use money borrowed from Sarah Goodridge, paying interest on what seems to be the same amount of money as before. A much larger interest is paid to Cutler and Co., the amount, however, dropping by a half in 1786 over 1785, and dropping by yet another half in 1787 over 1786. During this period the firm seems to have owed William Newcomin interest on about £100 to £200, and to William Elliott on about £600. The end of 1788 seems to have marked some sort of achievement for the firm, for on two consecutive months, October and November, they paid off first William Newcomin and then William Elliott.

In 1794 the Interest Account just barely broke even. During that year the firm paid out interest to the following: to Wise, Farwell and Co., Totnes Bankers; to George Bodley (their London Bankers); to Cunningham and Co. of Scotland; to a probable relative, F.R. Holdsworth; as well as to John Page of Portugal, and Olive and Co., both of whom

seen to have made insurances for them. It was in the year following this that the firm's Interest Account made such a great loss, paying off the assignees of Holdsworth Newman. By 1796 the firm seems to have no interest payments to make on borrowed money (except on the longterm investment of Rebecca Cornwall), and a little to Olive and Co., probably only the natural result of a running business account. This is true for the early years of the 1800's, and during 1800 they paid only minimal amounts to Culin, Elford and Co., to their bankers, Bodley and Co., and in 1801 they paid on a trust account set up with Lydston Newman. To the end of this ledger in 1806, the only debits to the Interest Account consist of the interest on the Cornwall account and discounts awarded to firms with which Newman's dealt.

The previous discussion of the Interest Account focused on the information available from the debit entries, i.e. those to whom the firm was obliged to pay for the use of money. Complementary information is, of course, available from the credit entries. It would seem to be of interest from two points of view. First, when the firm itself was obliged to borrow money it is interesting to see if, and to whom, they themselves lent out money for which they then received interest. Second, during the later years when the Interest Account became profitable, it is interesting to see who borrowed from them, and whether or not there were any basic changes in the source of interest coming in to them.

Throughout the time of Robert Newman and Co. (1780-1806), and even during the time of the previous firm of John Newman and Co. (1776-1780), the credit entries of the Interest Account seem to divide

into two natural groups of entries, one - discounts and the other - Interest proper. The discount entries would seem to refer to discounts (mainly of purchases) for payment of the bills on time or early. In effect, these entries would then show us some of the suppliers that the firm made use of in their general dealings in business. Among them, one can identify also some of the men who served as ships' captains, e.g. Capt. James Ball, Capt. Ambrose Lyon and Capt. Wollcott. Some of the other names to which discount references are made include the following: Chafe (Petty Harbour planters), Cookworthy and Co. (druggists), William Fryer (Bristol commission merchants), Gemmer and Stone (net and twine merchants at Bridport), Grey, Olive and Co. (London commission agents), Hingston (a Dartmouth ship owner), Stephen Jarvis (a local tradesman), M. Luscombe (a Plymouth broker for prize goods), John Stockman (a blacksmith), and Teague (a merchant in the Newfoundland trade).

The other group of entries on the credit side of the Interest Account were entries registering payment of interest on money borrowed from the firm. The firm lent money for periods of time to a number of individuals and firms. Among them was John Benson, a small Newfoundland merchant, who seems to have borrowed from the newly formed firm of Robert Newman and Co. in 1780 and continued to depend on them for funds at least until the outbreak of war with France in 1793. The amount of interest paid, and presumably the amount of capital on which it was owed, varied considerably, perhaps being at its highest in 1790. Another borrower of some amount was the firm of Oades and Sam Bailey

and Co., a small firm in the Newfoundland trade. They seem to have experienced financial difficulties during the 1789-mid-1790's, repaying consistently heavy sums throughout this period, perhaps on a sum as high as £800-1000. Another borrower appears to have been the Perring and Lee combination. Richard Perring seems to have made use of Newman's financial resources during the mid and late 1780's, and, in combination with others (most recognizably, Lee), again during most of the 1790's. Again, the amounts are fairly heavy, this being particularly so during 1793 and 1794. During the last years of the period under study, the firm advanced money on the largest scale it had ever done, this time to Joseph Steer (Stear?). From 1803 to 1807, and quite possibly beyond that, the firm received back from Steer an amount of roughly £250. The interest rate on another account (the only one indicated throughout the whole set) was about 7.7 percent (in 1793). If the same rate applied in the early 1800's, Joseph Steer had borrowed from them an amount close of £3500, a considerable sum.

Two other borrowers of interest during this period were Thomas Stokes and Co., yet another merchant in the Newfoundland trade, and Thomas Sheppard. Stokes seems to have begun to borrow from Newman's as early as 1789, perhaps on an amount of about £300 to £350. He seems to have kept the same sum during the following year, this being the height of the crash and depression. Over the next few years the amount paid by them reduced itself sharply so as to be almost inconsequential, indicating that perhaps (a) they went out of business, or (b) that the loan was paid back and they survived the period. One

last individual to whom the firm made loans for a considerable length of time was Thomas Sheppard. As early as 1792 he had apparently borrowed an amount close to £1000. By 1796 (still computing the amount at roughly 7 percent) he had increased his indebtedness to about £1300, and maintained himself at about this level until 1802, after which he seems to have cut down his debt almost one half. A lucrative source of interest for the firm until roughly 1795 was the Sailor's Account. During the early period, the firm seems to have consistently received interest on their Sailor's Account, an amount which would seem to have been around £300. For some reason, after 1795 the value of interest coming in on the Sailor's Account seems to have dropped sharply.

(There are, of course, during all this period, entries for amounts both to discounts and to interest under the ambiguous name of "Sundries".

For most of these it is impossible to give any relevant account.)

Perhaps most significant is the difference in the Newman's Interest Account entries before and after the year 1795. Before 1795 Newman's were not doing too much dealing in stocks and bills, and their profits seem to have been reinvested back into the firm's operations. By 1795 the firm could purchase about £1200 worth of 3 percent Consols.

From then until 1806 the Interest Account received significant returns of interest on stock held, the amount generally experiencing considerable growth. This investment of surplus money in stock and negotiable stock kept their capital in a position of earning dividends while still being reasonably liquid. Garlands, on the other hand, also merchants in the Newfoundland trade, tended to invest their surplus in mortgages, and

found that it could not be easily liquefied to meet current demands when expenses in the Newfoundland trade were exceptionally heavy.⁴⁹

During the 1790's Profit and Loss conclusions were drawn on other accounts, the Dollars Account, Navy Bills Account, Lottery Tickets Account, and a Loan Subscription Account. The first of these, the Dollars Account, gives profit/loss entries for the following years: 1790, 1791, 1792, 1794, 1795, and once again around 1800. With the exception of 1795, this account was always successful, never amounting to very much, usually about £15, excepting an £11 loss in 1792 and a higher than usual (£95) profit in 1795. A Profit entry was made for a 1796 account on Navy Bills (£326/9/1) and also a Profit entry on a Subscription amounting to £271/17/6. On the other hand, they did register a small loss on yet another financial manoeuvre, the Lottery Ticket Account.

In summary, the examination of the financial affairs of the firm during this period brought to light some important information on the profitability of the firm as a whole and of its component parts such as the Fish Account, Cod and Seal Oil Account, the Newfoundland Stores Account, the Fleet, the Exchange Account, the Interest Account,

⁴⁹ Garland Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

and a few minor accounts such as the Dollars Account, Navy Bills Account, Lottery Tickets Account, and a Loan Subscription Account. Running through most of the accounts, one can see that the firm experienced some retardation and difficulty during what was considered a boom period (although they did manage to expand geographically in 1784). On the other hand, when the war with France broke out, the firm, instead of finding itself under increasing strain as did the trade in general, found that its position had greatly improved. Its profitability on almost all fronts, the fleet excepted, seems to have increased tremendously. Perhaps the Interest Account serves to illustrate this best. During the 1780's the Interest Account experienced losses, while during the 1790's the firm was making money on surplus cash invested in other individuals and firms, but also in the stock market.

CHAPTER VI

HOW NEWMAN'S HANDLED THEIR TRADE

In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to give some idea of the very general expansion (in spite of fluctuations) in the volume and value of the physical items handled by the firm, fish, oil and supplies and wine being explored as examples. Whereas the previous chapter attempted to examine what the firm handled during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, this chapter will attempt to show to some degree how the company handled these same items over the period. Collection and distribution points were necessary, so premises and personnel must be examined. All items had to be transported from supplier to purchaser, so the firm's fleet must be investigated. An analysis of the fleet holds the key to other insights as well, the changeover to the supply trade and residential fishery being reflected in the changing proportions of fishing versus cargo ships in the firm's fleet. An analysis of shipping movements reveals changing patterns of trade, the firm's reactions to changing relationships between supply and demand. Finally, this chapter will attempt to show how the firm's managing partners reacted to things like banking and finances, communications and international conditions. In this attempt to personalize the firm, some idea will be given also of auxiliary, non-essential functions performed by the company.

Premises

Possibly the most significant step taken during this period was the setting up of additional premises on the island. Their interest in the supply trade is apparent in the location of these new establishments in the midst of a developing residential fishery on the south coast of the island. Along with an increase in the number of these new establishments was an increase in the number of non-fishing employees, acting as agents, clerks, accountants, and the craftsmen such as coopers and shipbuilders, etc.

In 1780 Robert Newman and Company, with its headquarters and centre of administration at Dartmouth had only one commercial site in Newfoundland. This was what their internal bookkeeping called the "Newfoundland Store" at St. John's. Traditionally, affairs in Newfoundland had always been run directly by one of the principals with the assistance of (perhaps gradually on a year-round basis), an agent. During the period of dissolving the firm of John Newman and Company and the consolidation of Robert Newman and Company, none of the Newmans seems to have personally directed the Newfoundland Store during the season, their establishment in St. John's being managed by Nicholas Churchill.¹ Churchill was born in Newfoundland, and had been a small independent merchant before coming into Newman's employ. For several

¹ See Churchill Name File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's, as well as the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers, 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

years at least Churchill returned to England at the end of the fishing season, leaving a subordinate to oversee the premises during the winter. Upon his arrival at the firm's headquarters he passed over to the partners the company's Newfoundland accounts, numbers of bills of exchange, and whatever small amounts of cash had been obtained during the season.²

With the coming of peace in 1783, one of the principals did take passage for St. John's.³ This was Robert Newman himself who arrived, possibly to reorganize, almost certainly to make arrangements to extend the company's operations to the newly developing South Coast of the Island at St. Lawrence. The company's entry into the commercial life of the St. Lawrence area was substantial, and both Newman and Churchill (who had returned to England over the winter of 1783-4) returned again to Newfoundland in the spring of 1784. By the end of that season almost 4,000 quintals of fish were shipped from St. Lawrence compared to 20,000 quintals shipped from their long-time establishment at St. John's. A year of heavy speculation, with the system of supplies still upset after the end of the war, saw an outstanding debt owed to the St. Lawrence operation of almost £5000.

²This information is apparent in the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, Robert Newman and Co. Ledger 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

³The discussion in this whole paragraph is based on reading the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, the Cod Fish Accounts, and other miscellaneous accounts in the Robert Newman and Co. Ledger 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

Elsewhere in Newfoundland the firm also found itself owed £10,000. Churchill returned to England at the end of 1784, but, perhaps because of the conditions of the trade, Robert Newman seems to have stayed on the island over the winter. The next spring, one of the other partners, Lydston Newman, came to Newfoundland with Churchill. The St. Lawrence store was given an agent of its own that year, James Russell, one of the company's former ship's captains.

In spite of the fact that the main company had registered losses during the previous three years,⁴ and that the Newfoundland Stores Account had made very small profits during 1789 and 1790, as well as a loss in 1791, the firm again expanded during 1792.⁵ This time the new stores were opened north of St. Lawrence at Burin, and west of St. Lawrence at Little Bay. The Burin establishment was much less stable and much less important than the earlier one at St. Lawrence. Being just to the north of the St. Lawrence establishment, it was initially part of the responsibility of the St. Lawrence agent, at this time Anthony O'Brien. For the rest of this period there are no fish shipments directly from Burin registered in the Cod Fish Accounts and no fish is listed in the Newfoundland Stores Accounts as being left over at Burin over the winters, as there are for the other three

⁴ During 1789 the firm lost £3998/6/4, during 1790, £1610/14/2, and during 1791, £641/15/3. This information comes from the Robert Newman and Co. Ledger 1788-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

⁵ During the same years the Newfoundland Stores Accounts had registered the following profits - £408/17/1, £58/7/2, and £669/11/8. This information comes from the Newfoundland Stores Accounts in Robert Newman and Co. Ledger, 1780-1796. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

establishments. Yet there are entries of remains and cash left there over most winters, though the value was only several hundred pounds as compared to the thousands of pounds worth of fish, goods, and bills left at the other premises. The mention of cash as well as goods left at Burin over the winter seems to indicate that perhaps a small year-round provisions trade, under the control of a sub-agent, was maintained there at least for several years.⁶

The Little Bay establishment remained definitely smaller than those at St. John's or St. Lawrence during this period, yet it was a solidly based operation and years later the affairs at St. Lawrence were moved to Little Bay.⁷ The Little Bay Plantation may have been purchased by the partners from their brother, Holdsworth Newman, or from another Dartmouth man who traded in Newfoundland, Thomas Tremlett.⁸ From the first year of its operations, Little Bay shipped salmon as well as cod. For a number of years after its beginning, the main agent at Little Bay remained migratory, returning to England at the end of the season. However, considerable quantities of fish were gathered at

⁶This information comes from the Newfoundland Stores Accounts in the Robert Newman and Co. Ledgers 1780-1796, 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3 and 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

⁷Phillip Tocque, Newfoundland as it was and as it is in 1877, p. 178.

⁸In 1791 Holdsworth Newman went bankrupt and to satisfy his creditors he was forced to sell some of his land holdings, among which were some in Newfoundland. Tremlett, also of Dartmouth, went bankrupt at this time as well. See their respective Name Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

Little Bay for winter and early spring shipments and these were presumably supervised by a sub-agent.

Thus, during this period Robert Newman and Company increased the number of their collection-distribution points from one to four. Though they had traditionally centered around St. John's, their new premises were located among a developing fishery based on residents and the house at St. John's would eventually be closed. They moved first to the Burin Peninsula and then westwards along the South Coast, a pattern which they continued to follow during the nineteenth century, setting up in such places as Harbour Breton,⁹ Gaultois,¹⁰ Jervis Island,¹¹ Sagona Island,¹² Burgeo,¹³ Pass Island,¹⁴ Barresway Cove,

⁹By 1812 Harbour Breton was one of their main establishments in Newfoundland, as can be seen in their letter book for the year. Newman Book No. 54/77, Reel E27.

¹⁰John Dollimount, A History of Fortune-Hermitage Bay, Maritime History Group paper, 196 (St. John's), p. 7. This is a very good study, Chapters One and Five being particularly useful.

¹¹Robert Newman and Co. letter to John Teage, June 8, 1812. Newman Book No. 54/77, Reel E27.

¹²Baine Johnson File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹³K. Bobbett, Burgeo: A Study in Historical Geography, Geography paper, Memorial University Geography Department, p. 5, 1973.

¹⁴Baine Johnson File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

Hermitage Cove, and Round Cove in Hermitage Bay,¹⁵ (see the map of Newman's Operations on the South Coast of Newfoundland¹⁶).

Personnel

The personnel of Robert Newman and Company seem to have been organised around four key groups: the staff at the Dartmouth headquarters, the agents at the Newfoundland premises themselves, the shipping personnel, and the commercial correspondents at the various ports, both in North America and in Europe.

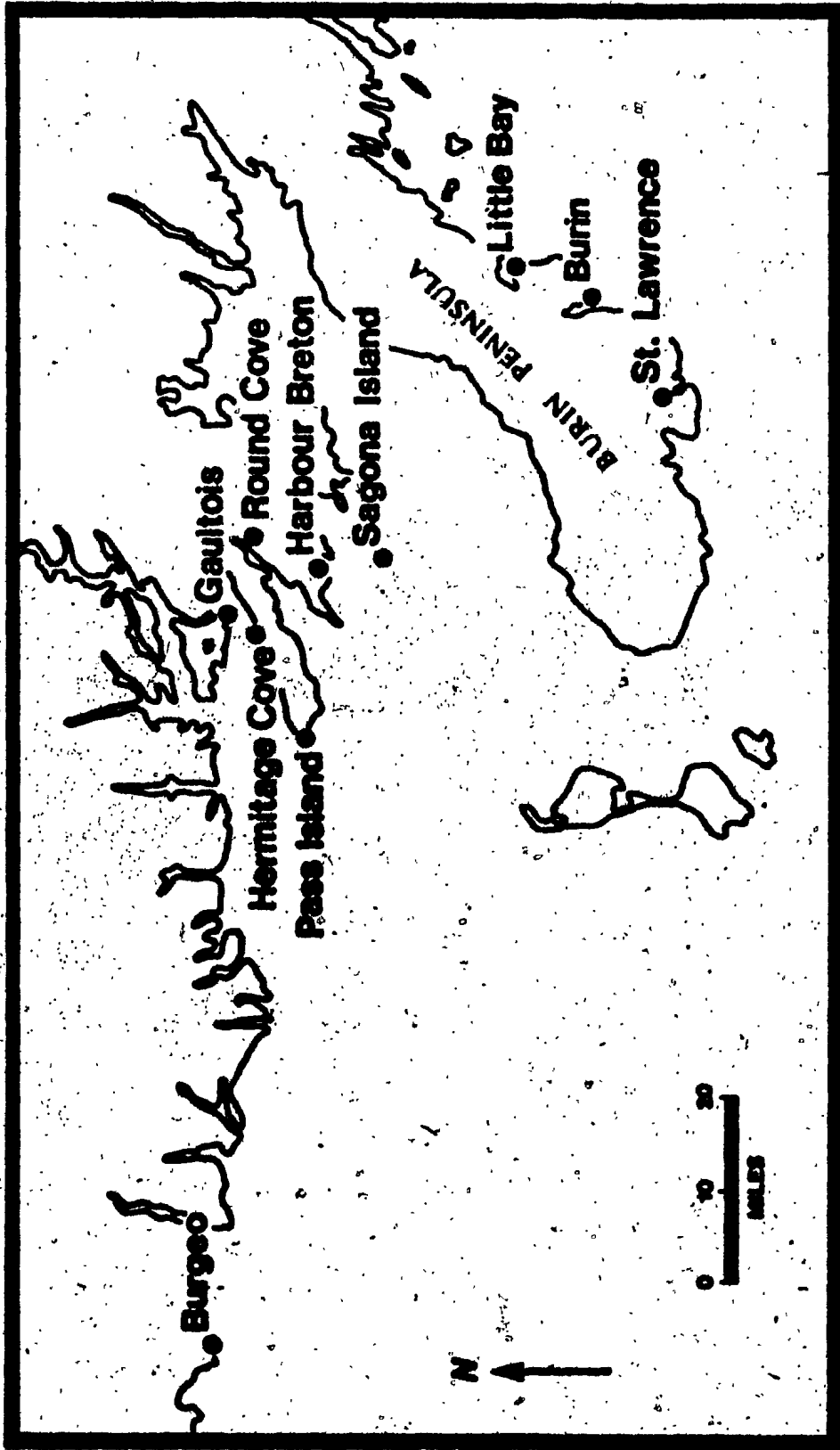
Initial activity was begun by the West Country headquarters of the firm, and it is around this group that the others revolved.¹⁷ Here the partners directed their employees to collect supplies, to recruit men for the fishery, to keep the company books, etc. They saw to the sale of arriving cargoes, sought customers for them, solicited orders for different items, and endeavored to get the best for least in insurance, freight, employees, and prices. From Dartmouth they knit together the various aspects of the trade, keeping suppliers in touch with them, keeping agents properly directed as to production and distribution, informing correspondents at the markets about the conditions of the fishery and agents of the state of the markets, as

¹⁵ John Dollimont, History of Fortune-Hermitage Bay, p. 15.

¹⁶ See map 6, page 162.

¹⁷ This discussion of personnel and their various functions is based on the firm's letter books for the period. Newman Books Nos. 22/38, Reel E9; 23/39, Reel E10; 26/45, Reel E11 and 54/77, Reel E27.

NEWMAN'S OPERATIONS ON THE SOUTH COAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND



Map No 6

well as giving directions to the captains of their vessels as to their behaviour both in Newfoundland and at the markets. From their letters came advice on a multitude of matters: how to get the best returns on insurance claims, where to seek repairs, where to look for new ships, what prices to ask for and what prices to accept, to the agents regarding supplies, to the captains regarding fish. Here was decided if the risks warranted paying insurance premiums, if specific correspondents could be suspected of deliberate wrong-doing, or merely of misjudgement. From Dartmouth came the clamour to the government on abuses, in petitions, or in requests for information. From the letters which left the port daily came comments, as informed as any, on the state of the current war, as well as the open acknowledgement of inability to be forewarned about the future, especially during wartime. Most of all, from the partners came a sense of direction: guidelines on how to act in potential situations, the extremes within which something was desirable and the principles, broadly stated, upon which they expected their employees to function.

At the scene of the greatest activity, in Newfoundland, the partners employed agents, at first semi-permanent, but increasingly resident. Agents organized whatever fishing voyages were to be undertaken, assigning other labourers to the local planters for whom they had been recruited. The agents kept the fishing and curing process continuing, overseeing all details in a general way, delegating functions as was necessary. Much depended upon their judgement on the

- spot, what planters could be trusted, when to take a man's word for what could not be proven, what policy to adopt immediately in the face of an unforeseen situation. With the agent rested the responsibility for many decisions that had to be made within the broad guidelines issued by the partners in Dartmouth, what price to give for what price fish, what fish to collect when the market or military situation appeared to be delicate, how to judiciously distribute his available supplies, when to send portions to other establishments in case of short supplies there, or for quicker sales there.

The firm of Robert Newman and Company maintained its firmest market correspondents at the ports of Viana and Oporto, on the Atlantic coast of Portugal.¹⁸ Here their fish-bearing ships arrived at various times of the year. The resident firm of Newman and Land arranged for the best prices available at their own ports, depending on the quality and amount to be handled. Here they maintained fish lodges in which they stored the fish if necessary, awaiting better prices or a less saturated market. From colleagues in other ports they gathered information of conditions elsewhere, and thus were able to direct a vessel to try another specific port if prices were obviously better there. While the vessel remained in port, it was cared for by the correspondent, who advanced any necessary money to the captain or to

¹⁸ This is quite apparent in reading the letter books of the firm during the season. It also shows up in fish sales, etc. as found in their ledgers for 1780-1796 and 1796-1806. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3; No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5; No. 22/38; Reel E9; No. 23/39; Reel E10; No. 26/45, Reel E11; and No. 54/77, Reel E27.

the crew, arranged for fresh supplies, etc. to be put on board, paid the ship's port charges and quarantine charges, arranged for extra labour to help with loading or unloading, etc. During wartime they were especially valuable as sources of information on military conditions, on the availability of additional shipping, and in the recovery of vessels captured by the enemy and put up for resale. From the ports of Viana and Oporto Newman's vessels departed with cargoes of wine and other fruits, cargoes arranged for by Newman and Land. The firm made use, of course, of other ports and other correspondents, although in a somewhat less consistent manner.

Although Newman and Land were correspondents both for the sale of fish and the purchase of wines and fruit, quite often the two functions were separate. At some ports Newman ships arrived only for supplies, in which case the correspondents' main business was to collect and prepare for shipment cargoes of food, supplies or equipment. At other ports, the firm's main need was for the disposal of the fish cargoes brought in by their vessels. At all ports, however, the correspondents acted as surrogates for the firm, extending their capacity in many directions.

The three previous groups were essentially stationary in location and consistent in activity. With these locations straddling the opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the importance of the final group, the ships' captains, can be seen clearly.¹⁹ The bulk of the

¹⁹This also is based primarily on the general contents of Robert Newman and Company Letter Books for this period.

provisions required for the Newfoundland Stores for sale to the resident merchants was purchased and collected by the Dartmouth headquarters of the firm and ships were needed to get them to their intended consumers. Fish, both that caught by their own crews and through bartering with the local planters, was marketed on the Atlantic coasts of Portugal and Spain or within the Mediterranean, and to get the fish there shipping was essential. The return to Newfoundland with salt for the fishery, or to England with wine and fruit depended upon shipping. The specific sequence of ports for an individual ship varied, but it was the shipping alone which could keep the suppliers and consumers in contact with each other. The larger ships travelled a more or less triangular route between England, Newfoundland, and Europe, while the smaller vessels supplemented this pattern, coasters running up to the mainland of North America, and bankers travelling directly between Newfoundland and England.

Shipping

In the period between 1780 and 1806, the firm used its shipping in a variety of ways. Within the over-all context of the fishery it owned "sack ships", "fishing ships" or "bankers" and Newfoundland-based coastal vessels, but it also owned an occasional English-based coaster and frequently took shares in vessels entirely unconnected with the Newfoundland trade.

The majority of Newman's fleet throughout the period was made up of sack ships which carried supplies from England to their establishments in Newfoundland, and then loaded fish for transportation

to the markets of Southern Europe (see Table 34).

As Table 35 shows, cargo vessels tended to be somewhat larger than the fishing ships which, however, continued to be an integral and vital part of the firm's operations at least during the first decade of this period. The fishing vessels normally left Dartmouth in the spring of each year loaded with passengers and supplies, discharged in Newfoundland and then fished all summer on the banks. At the end of the season the larger bankers might take a cargo of fish to Southern Europe, but most of them returned to England (usually to Dartmouth) with fish oil and passengers who had been discharged after being employed in Newfoundland.

As the Company diversified its operations from St. John's by opening stores on the South Coast, it became necessary to employ coasters to keep provisions, equipment, fish, and communications moving freely between the firm's establishments. With the growth of the trade to the mainland these vessels were also used to obtain provisions, lumber, and coal from Quebec, New Brunswick, Cape Breton and Halifax.²⁰ The "English" coasters moved along the shores of England and Ireland transporting "train oil"²¹ from Dartmouth to other towns and returning

²⁰This information appears in the accounts of the ships thus employed, as well as in entries of the goods in the Newfoundland Stores Accounts and entries of Insurance charges for these trips. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3, and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

²¹"Train oil" is another term used for fish oil (unrefined cod liver oil).

TABLE 34.

Newman's Shipping Fleet 1780-1806²²

Year	Cargo		Fishing		Total No.	Tons
	Ves. No.	Tons	Ves. No.	Tons		
1780	2	310	1 ^o	*	3	310*
1781	4	300*	1	*	5	300**
1782	6	840*	1	*	7	840**
1783	5	950	4	200**	9	1150**
1784	6	880	4	100***	10	980**
1785	6	870	4	120**	10	990**
1786	7	750	3	150	10	900**
1787	5	690	4	266	9	956
1788	6	828*	3	159*	9	987**
1789	4	622	3	265	7	887
1790	4	622	3	265	7	887
1791	5	697	3	255	8	982
1792	5	728	6	413*	11	1141*
1793	9	1092	2	159	11	1152
1794	9	1131	2	114	11	1245
1795	7	635	3	159	10	794
1796	8	866	2	94	10	960
1797	8	1005	-	-	8	1005
1798	6	619	-	-	6	619
1799	8	941	-	-	8	941
1800	9	1029	-	-	9	1029
1801	10	1013	-	-	10	1013
1802	10	1210	-	-	10	1210
1803	10	1210	-	-	10	1210
1804	10	1184	-	-	10	1184
1805	11	1266	-	-	11	1266
1806	12	1585	-	-	12	1585

* This refers to the tonnage of one vessel being missing.
 ** refers to two vessels' tonnage being unavailable.

²² Most of the information came either from the accounts of the individual ships or from Lloyds' Registry of Shipping (Shipowners and Underwriters Series). For cautionary note see introduction page ix.

TABLE 35

Average Tonnage of Newman's Cargo and Fishing Vessels²³

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cargo Ships</u>	<u>Fishing Ships</u>
1780	155	*
1781	100	*
1782	168	*
1783	190	100
1784	147	60
1785	145	50
1786	125	60
1787	138	53
1788	166	88
1789	156	88
1790	156	88
1791	139	69
1792	146	80
1793	121	57
1794	126	53
1795	91	47
1796	108	-
1797	126	-

* Size of these ships is not available.

²³After 1797 no other fishing ships could be identified. These figures are taken mostly from individual ship's accounts and from the Lloyds' Registry of Shipping (Shipowners and Underwriters Series).

with various goods which were either disposed of in Dartmouth, or exported to Newfoundland.

Finally, the Company did take part in "speculative" voyages for vessels entirely unconnected with the fishery. They took shares in several privateers - especially during the American Revolution,²⁴ and occasionally engaged in joint ventures with other merchants either in the consignment and sales of specific goods,²⁵ or in the operation of what would now be termed a "Tramp vessel", making its profits through freighting goods for any shipper to any port in the North Atlantic.²⁶

Over the last two decades of the eighteenth century the most basic change in the composition of Newman's fleet was a simple enlargement of its numbers. Reference to Table 34, page 168 will show that though there were strong fluctuations in the size of the fleet, an over-all increase is fairly obvious. The fluctuations thus revealed

²⁴One such privateer was the Fox, in which the firm had a 15/32 share from 1780-1781, the rest being owned by other Dartmouth merchants. It was captured by the Dutch in 1781 in the West Indies.

²⁵One of these joint ventures was with Robert Harris of Dartmouth, in Linens, in 1781. Another was an adventure in wines with Newman and Land in 1793. A third such venture was one in 'Staves, Hoops, and Puncheons' during 1783-84 with Arthur Holdsworth, Peter Dugier, Thomas Tremlett and R. Routh of Dartmouth. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E3.

²⁶One of these was the Duke of Clarence, in which the firm acquired a 2/3 share in 1801 from its captain-owner, John Prin. The vessel traded to Martinique and up and down the American seaboard. Newman Book No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

were due to a natural loss of ships at sea, the loss of ships to the enemy, and the sale of damaged or less-than-dependable ships. Thus, the increase that appears masks the actual amount of replacements made to compensate for sometimes heavy losses.

Another element in the changing composition of the fleet was a diversification in the type of ownership by which the firm held for some of its vessels. As in previous years the firm owned most of its vessels outright. However, at times the firm went into partial ownership of a number of vessels. In some of these cases, the partially-owned vessels were not basically part of their Newfoundland trade, being rather adventures taken on the chance of quick returns in other fields.

Still another element that added diversity to Newman's shipping facilities was the new role played by shipping that was not their own.²⁷ In spite of the increase in the number of vessels which they themselves operated, the firm constantly found that their facilities alone were both inadequate and lacking in sufficient flexibility. To offset this they made use of cargo space available on other vessels already in the same trade. (There had, of course, been some amount of this done in earlier years, but it had been much more limited and much less important.) There was greater scope and hence greater significance for this type of facility in the movement of supplies to Newfoundland

²⁷ The following analysis of the changing composition of the fleet was a result of a year-by-year and port-by-port study of all ships identified as belonging to the firm. (See Tables 36 and 37).

than in the movement of fish to market. The firm continued to send out from a limited number of ports large cargoes of basic requirements on board their own vessels. At the same time smaller cargoes of more specialized items, available from a far wider range of ports could be sent to their premises in Newfoundland. It also insured a greater flexibility of timing, a factor of considerable importance in the supply trade. Thus, items needed in Newfoundland but not available when their own vessels sailed, could still be shipped to the island. This applied as well to late-arriving requests for additional items in sudden or heavy demand. The sudden loss of one of their own ships and its cargo had to be dealt with by sending additional supplies, often before a suitable replacement vessel could be purchased and fitted out. In the latter case, the whole cargo space of another merchant vessel might be chartered to take out a full cargo. However, this chartering of the cargo space of an entire vessel was much less frequent, being less flexible, and tended to appear more often in the shipment of fish to market than in the movement of supplies to Newfoundland. In essence, the role of non-Company shipping was to give a flexibility and a sensitivity to very particular circumstances in the trade that their own ships could not hope to provide. Thus, the use of vessels in this way was most noticeable in periods when demand was increasing and conditions were uncertain, especially if it was accompanied by substantial losses of the firm's own ships.

Changing Patterns of Trade²⁸

At the beginning of this period the movement of Newman's shipping was simple and almost unvarying. For example, in 1780 the firm sent two sack ships from Dartmouth to St. John's with supplies for their store.²⁹ These vessels remained in Newfoundland until they were loaded with fish caught by their only fishing ship, the sloop Dispatch, or obtained through barter with the resident "planters". They then took fish to Oporto, where they shipped wine and salt back to Dartmouth. Once there they were laid up, or were refitted, until the next fishing season commenced in the spring of 1781. Because of the hostilities, the fishing sloop wintered in Newfoundland, although it would normally have taken oil and passengers to England. The smallness of their fleet forced the firm to send out additional "part cargoes" to Newfoundland on no less than eight vessels owned by other Devonshire merchants trading to Newfoundland, while they had to charter a vessel to take a cargo of fish to Portugal and had to ship their oil to England aboard another merchant's ship.³⁰ By 1806 this simple pattern had vanished, and the trading structure had become much more intensive and complex, a complexity which reflected the sweeping changes which occurred within

²⁸See Tables 36 and 37, pp. 177 and 178.

²⁹This is apparent in the Newfoundland Stores Accounts for 1780, Robert Newman and Co. Ledger. Newman Book No. 8/4, Reel E4.

³⁰Most of the above discussion of the 1780 pattern was compiled from the accounts of the ships concerned, from the Newfoundland Stores Account, the Cod Fish Account and the Cod Oil Account for that year.

the Newfoundland fishery and trade during this period.

By 1806 the number of vessels which the firm sent with supplies out to Newfoundland in the spring had increased to about a dozen from the two of 1780.³¹ These vessels delivered their cargoes to a number of different places along the coast of Newfoundland where the firm had set up additional establishments. (A single vessel might call at only one of these places, or at a number of them). Each vessel no longer called into Newfoundland only once a year; indeed, many of them, by now, were calling into the firm's island premises up to three or four times. Besides coming in with cargoes from British Europe, they were now coming in from a far wider range of ports. Thus, in 1806, the firm's vessels delivered supplies and goods also from North American ports and from ports in Continental Europe. By 1806 Newman's were no longer operating any fishing vessels.³² There were a few vessels, however, which remained permanently in Newfoundland coasting between the premises and between Newfoundland and the nearby ~~ports~~ of the North American mainland. The firm continued to rely on varying numbers of vessels belonging to others to take out partial cargoes to the island on freight and on chartered vessels to take off some of their fish to market.

³¹The following discussion of this later pattern was compiled from the ships' accounts, the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, the Cod Fish Accounts and the Cod Oil Accounts from about 1800 to 1806.

³²See Table 34, p. 168.

Thus, between 1780 and 1806, patterns of movement had changed and grown more complex. Some of the major changes which had brought on the later patterns included, of course, the permanent decline of the migratory fishery. They also included an increasing focus on the supply trade, changes in the sources of supplies, changes in the market ports throughout the period, an over-all intensification of usage for their ships, and a fluctuating position played by the shipping owned by others in this evolving network.

During the years of the American War the firm had operated only one fishing vessel which, instead of venturing across the Atlantic in either direction, remained in Newfoundland throughout the year. At the end of the war there was a normal rise in the number of these vessels,³³ a rise which did not, however, detract from the growing importance of the sack ships. During 1784, when the firm was making its move to the South Coast it also operated a number of bankers in that area and until the end of the 1780's the firm continued to operate a steady number of vessels on the banks fishing. Coinciding with the firm's initial period of expansion, however, was a considerable change in the vessels which actually did go banking. A second period of considerable change coincided with another period of expansion by the firm, this time in 1792. Throughout the 1790's the number of fishing vessels fluctuated and what had appeared to be an attempt to expand this type of operation in 1792 went into a very rapid decline with the

³³ See Table 34, p. 168.

outbreak of war in 1793. Before the decade was over, their "bankers" and the traditional pattern of movement which they had followed had disappeared³⁴ and the transformation from fishing to supply firm was complete.

An increasing focus on the supply trade had resulted in a greater sensitivity to developing sources of supplies and in a more intensive usage of their ships both in the supply and marketing ends of the trade. With this focus on the supplying of goods and provisions to the residents the sack ships' movements changed as the sources of supply changed.³⁵ At the beginning of this period Dartmouth was the major source for English goods, with Waterford in Ireland the major source of food provisions. Consequently, most of the vessels arriving in Newfoundland came in from Dartmouth or Waterford. Several times, however, the firm attempted to diversify the range of ports from which it shipped English goods to Newfoundland, for example, during the early years after the war with America, in the years immediately following the crash, and during the last few years of this period. In general, during periods of expansion the increasing amounts of goods required encouraged them to send their own ships around to places like London, Bristol, and Liverpool to take on full cargoes for Newfoundland. During times of conflict or economic difficulty the firm tended to concentrate

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ This analysis of the changing sources of supply has been largely based on the ships' accounts and on the Newfoundland Stores' Accounts, with some references made to the accounts of specific suppliers. (see Tables 36 and 37).

TABLE NO. 36
Main Ports Of Origin Of Ships Arriving At Newman's Premis

	Brit.	Bristol	L'pod	London	Plym.	Portsm.	Poole	England	W'Ind.	Cork	Lim.	Youghall	Dublin	Stigo	France	Jersey	Quorn	Horn	Clyde	to ant.	Viana	Porto	Lisbon	St. Ubes	Bilboa	Riv.	Ferrol	Coronna	Rote V.	Vigo	Gadiz	Malaga		
1774	2																																	
1775	5								1													1												
1776	4	1																				1			1									
1777	3				1				1						1							1												
1778	3								1															1				1						
1779	5																					1												
1780	1	1		1					3		1												1											
1781	13				1				3		1												1											
1782	31								11							1																		
1783	53	2		12	1				11													2											1	
1784	32	2	1	111			11		12	2	1											2											2	
1785	8	1		11					52													1	2										2	
1786	84	1							25		1											3	1	1										
1787	7	1		1					32		1							1				1			1									
1788	81			1					32													1												
1789	62								41													1		1										
1790	61		1						32		1											1			1									
1791	9								31													3											1	
1792	31	4	1	2	2				12													2	1											
1793	611			1					2			2										3												
1794	61	1	1						2		1	1	1									1	6										2	
1795	12	11	1	1	1				2													2	11											
1796	511	2	1	11	1				23		1											1	2		1									
1797	53					1			2					1								2	1	1										
1798	53		1			2	1		2													2	2	11										
1799	63		2		1	2	1		1	1												4	3	1										
1800	6		3	1	1	2			2													1	4	2										
1801	31		11	2			1		11	1												1	1											
1802	3		12	1					4	1																								
1803	3		2	1					12													1	2	1									4	
1804	4	1	3	1					2														3	1										
1805	51	1	2	1					2														3	3										
1806	71	12	22	1					1													3	2	3	1	2								

Colour Key : ■ Newman's ships; ■ Non Company ships; ■ Intermediate ports only.

TABLE NO. 37
Main Ports Of Destination Of Ships Leaving Newman's Premises in Newfoundland 1774 - 1806

Year	Bristol	L'pool	London	Plym.	Batm.	Poole	Englnd	W'Ham	Coast	Lim.	Kingstn	Dublin	Sligo	France	Jersey	Queen	Norm.	Clyde	to Ant.	Viana	Porto	Lisbon	St. Ues	Bilboa	Riv.	Ferrol	Coruna	Port V.	Vigo	Cadiz	Malaga	Carta	Alic.	Barcel.	Figi	Laguna	Canta	Naples	Barletta						
4																			1		3																								
5	1	1																			2	1		1																1					
6	1																				1	3								1															
7														1							1	1					1														1				
8	2																				2	1								1															
9	1																		1		2	2																							
10	1																				1	1																							
11	1		1																		2	1	2																						
12	1		1	1																	2	2	3	1		1																			
13	1	1																			4	1	1	1	1					2											1				
14	1																		1		3	1	1	1					2													1			
15	2																			1	3	1	1	2																		1			
16	3	1				1															1	3	1					1		1	1	1										1			
17	1		1																		1	2	1						1		1											2			
18	1						1														1	2		1	1				1													1			
19	1						1														1	4		1	2				1													1			
20	2																				1	3																					1		
21	3																				6						1			1												1			
22	2	1																			2	1	5		1																	1			
23	1																				1	6																					1		
24	2	1																			3	1	6							2													1		
25	3																				3	1	1																			2	1		
26	1																				3	6	1	2																		1			
27	2	1																			6	1	3																						
28	1	2																			3	3	2	1																					
29	3																				4	2	3	2																		1			
30	1																				1	2	1	5	2																	1			
31	2	1	1																		6	1	1		1																	2			
32	1	1	1																		3	5	1		2					2													1		
33	2	2																			6	5																						1	
34	1																				6	3	2																						
35	4		2																		5	3	2																						
36	2	1	2																		6	4	2	4	1																				

Colour Key: ■ Newman's ships, ■ Non Company ships; ■ Intermediate ports only.

its shipping, somewhat reduced in numbers, out of its main port of Dartmouth, their vessels making intermediary stops at Waterford to pick up food provisions.

This direct reliance upon Ireland as a source of provisions was at its heaviest at the end of the American War, goods going from Ireland to Newman's in Newfoundland either on their own vessels, on chartered vessels, or as smaller cargoes going on freight. The Irish trade, for most of this period was concentrated on Waterford, although there was some diversification during the mid 1780's and again during the first years of the war with France. However, this direct trade grew substantially less before the period ended, the decline beginning soon after the crash of 1789-1791. This apparent decline may be partially accounted for by the firm beginning to purchase some of its Irish provisions (mainly salt beef, pork, cheese and butter)³⁶ at ports in England such as Liverpool, or from a number of merchants in St. John's that began to deal heavily in such items.³⁷

At about the same time that direct trade to Ireland for provisions began to decline, there was a rise in direct trade with British North America. The war with America had cut the merchants off from important sources of supplies from New England and this turning

³⁶That these are the most typical of Irish provisions can be seen from the cargoes carried by the ships which came into Newman's from ports in Ireland.

³⁷Examples of such merchants include Hunt, Stabb, and Preston, of Dartmouth, and George and Thomas Kough, of Ross.

to British North America was an attempt to find substitutes. A few trips were made to Halifax and St. Pierre during the American War itself, and by 1787 Quebec was developing as a consistent supplier of provisions and timber. Before the end of the century, trade had been resumed up to the American seaboard and New York became second only, as a supplier, to Quebec. Provisions obtained from North American sources differed from those obtained from Irish sources, for these were mainly bread and flour.³⁸ Though Newman's ships never went regularly to Halifax before 1806, they did expand this trade a little during the years of the war with France, Halifax being a supplier of West Indian produce as well as provisions and considered a good place to purchase additional shipping. During the very last years of this period, the coal mines in Sydney attracted Newman's coastal vessels, sometimes two or three times a summer.³⁹ Being relatively close to Newfoundland ships could be sent up to North America either several times a season,⁴⁰ or once between voyages elsewhere.⁴¹

³⁸This can be seen from an analysis of the cargoes of the ships which took part in this trade. It can also be seen in the accounts held with some of the North American suppliers, principally T. Bache of New York and Monroe and Bell of Quebec. Newman Books No. 8/4, Reel E3, and No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

³⁹For example, during 1805, the Speedy ran up to Sydney twice. Newman Book No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

⁴⁰For example, during 1806, the Dove came in from Boston having called at Sydney on the way back, and then came in later from Quebec. Newman Book No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

⁴¹For example, during 1803, the Brig. Mediterranean first came in from Dartmouth, and before leaving for Oporto, with fish, made a run up to New York. Newman Book No. 9/10, Reels E4 and E5.

Changing military and economic conditions meant that the firm at times had their ships coming in and out from different market ports.⁴² During the entire period, the Oporto-Viana area of Portugal remained their main port but there were times when they sent their ships elsewhere. During the early years of the war with America before Spain entered the conflict on the American side, they had shipped some fish into Northern Spain. As the war progressed and as it became more difficult to approach the Continental markets, the firm sent one or two shipments to the West Indies, normally an unprofitable area for them. With the end of the war the firm quickly reverted completely back to Continental Europe. Here, markets that had been closed by the hostilities presented strong demands for fish, and merchants scrambled into a variety of ports to make the most of it. At this time, besides maintaining steady shipments into Portugal, the firm, like most others, diversified, sending shipments into Italy and again into Spain. Their trade with Italy was almost completely confined to this period and was never very substantial.⁴³ It was during this generally more diversified post-war period that shipments were made to the ports of Spain, shipments that were not resumed until 1801 and 1802, when the conflict with France and Spain came to a temporary halt. There was some attempt,

⁴²This analysis of market ports is the result of studying the ports of destination of all Newman's ships and exports as they left the island, based on ships' accounts, Cod Fish and Cod Oil Accounts, Newman Ledgers, Newman Books Nos. 8/4, Reel E3 and 9/10, Reels E4 and E5. See also Tables 36 and 37, pp. 177 and 178.

⁴³They did manage to send in one or two cargoes during the course of the war, one in 1799, and another in 1802.

as well, on the firm's part to dispose of a little fish in North America, and they made a concerted effort to establish a market there for Portuguese wines. Though this did begin to grow in the 1790's, it was a feature of the North American trade that cargoes sent there for sale were less valuable and less bulky than the cargoes of supplies brought back to the firm's premises in Newfoundland.

Three points may be made about the major group of vessels which the firm used in the supply trade and in the marketing of their fish. The first point is that the average size of these vessels, which had been fairly high during the 1780's, had dropped substantially by the next decade.⁴⁴ In other words, during the years of the American War the firm was using less, but larger, vessels to carry supplies and fish. The situation was quite different in 1795-1796, during the war with France, for by then tonnage was especially low,⁴⁵ and it did not rise substantially before the end of this period. This reduced size of the average cargo-carrier (not a feature of other firms in the trade during this time),⁴⁶ when kept in the context of more numerous ships, indicates a greater flexibility within a given carrying capacity, but also a greater operating cost.

⁴⁴See Table 38, p. 183.

⁴⁵This may reflect their inability to purchase ships of more desirable size, and it may explain why the firm gradually turned to having their own vessels built.

⁴⁶See, for example, Benjamin Lester File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

TABLE 38

Averages Relating to Tonnages and Crews⁴⁷ of Newman's Fleet

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Tons Per Cargo Ship</u>	<u>Average Crew Per Ship</u>	<u>Average Tons Per Man</u>
1780	155	11.00	13.64
1781	100	6.00	20.83
1782	168	11.80	14.24
1783	190	12.00	13.75
1784	147	13.60	12.87
1785	145	12.17	11.92
1786	125	10.85	10.42
1787	138	12.00	11.50
1788	166	12.25	11.84
1789	156	12.25	12.74
1790	156	12.25	12.74
1791	139	11.43	11.19
1792	146	10.85	11.24
1793	121	10.43	11.61
1794	126	10.70	11.72
1795	91	9.43	8.91
1796	108	9.60	9.79
1797	126	10.14	12.52
1798	115	10.20	11.27
1799	118	-	-
1800	127	10.85	11.71
1801	109	10.80	10.01
1802	121	-	-
1803	121	-	-
1804	118	-	-
1805	115	-	-
1806	132	-	-

⁴⁷ This table has been compiled from the accounts of individual ships, and from the Lloyds' Register of Shipping (Shipowners and Underwriters Series). Averages were worked out for the tonnage and crew size of the ships which the firm owned and directly operated in the trade each year. The average number of tons per man was obtained by dividing the average tonnage by the average crew.

The second point which may be made about the evolution of these vessels relates to the crew size used to handle them.⁴⁸ During the latter years of the American War the average crew was relatively small compared to the amount of ship's tonnage which they handled. After the end of the war, however, the amount of tonnage handled by each crewman continued to decline until it reached its lowest during 1795-1796. The relatively high number of tons per crewman during the American War can, of course, be partially attributed to the shortage of manpower and the need to sail with smaller crews than were desirable. The increasing availability of numbers of men after the war ended may account in part for the rising numbers of crewmen per vessel during the remaining years of the 1780's. The necessity to make do with men who were not skilled sailors may account, again - in part - for the rising numbers of men needed to run each ship. The crisis of 1789-1791 did force the firm to cut down the size of its ships' crews in the interests of economy, though as the crisis passed, the size of the crews again climbed, going through severe fluctuations during the bad war years of 1795-1797. Throughout this period, then, there seems to have been no significant rise in the efficiency of the crews, this being an aspect of the ships' operations very sensitively attuned to the size of the ships and to the availability of skilled manpower.

As the period progressed, it can be pointed out that the firm subjected their cargo-carriers to more intensive usage. There were,

⁴⁸See Table 38, p. 183.

of course, minor fluctuations from year to year, as can be seen in Table 39. Thus, from this table it can be seen that the increasing rate of usage for their vessels during the 1780's was rather slow, with actual declines for a number of years. The initial spurt seems to have occurred with the crash years of 1789-1791, as the firm not only made do with smaller crews of seamen⁴⁹ but kept their vessels much more fully employed in moving in the required amounts of supplies and in moving out the collected amounts of fish. The increasing rate of usage per ship again grew more rapidly during the years of the war with France, though again there were fluctuations, especially during 1802-1803 at the end of the truce period. In spite of the fluctuations from one year to another, the intensification of ships' usage was one of the stronger and more persistent trends that can be tabulated about the firm's operations during the whole period from 1780 to 1806.

Throughout this period, the firm made use of other vessels to supplement their own shipping.⁵⁰ Their reliance on the shipping of

⁴⁹This can be seen in Table 38, page 183, where the amount of tonnage handled per seaman increased.

⁵⁰This analysis of ships that were not owned by the firm is based on a study of the Newfoundland Stores' Accounts, the Cod Fish Accounts and the Cod Oil Accounts. (Accounts with individual ships were not kept). This analysis is related to the section on supplementary shipping, pp. 171-172.

TABLE 39

Average Number of Trips⁵¹ Per Newman's Vessels⁵²

<u>Year</u>	<u>Trips</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Trips</u>
1780	2.00	1794	3.30
1781	1.75	1795	2.67
1782	2.40	1796	3.00
1783	2.33	1797	2.57
1784	2.29	1798	3.17
1785	2.44	1799	3.25
1786	2.20	1800	3.00
1787	2.44	1801	3.10
1788	2.25	1802	4.38
1789	2.86	1803	2.67
1790	2.86	1804	3.78
1791	3.00	1805	3.82
1792	2.44	1806	4.25
1793	2.60		

⁵¹A trip would consist of a vessel leaving Newfoundland for one or other of the main ports of destination. To qualify for two trips for the same year that ship would have to have left Newfoundland a second time and again arrived either at market, in England, etc.

⁵²This table has been compiled from the individual accounts for each of the firm's vessels and from the Newfoundland Stores Accounts, the Cod Fish Accounts, the Cod Oil Accounts in the Company Ledgers from 1780-1806. The averages were obtained by dividing the total number of voyages made directly into or out of Newman's Newfoundland premises by the number of vessels which the firm was using that year. This table refers only to shipping owned by the firm.

part cargoes on freight was heaviest during the boom years soon after the war with America was over, and again in the late 1790's when, in spite of heavier usage of their own ships, they were still in need of greater carrying capacity. Reliance was at its lowest during the crash of 1789-1791 when the firm made maximum use of its home port of Dartmouth and of its crew size by sending each vessel on more voyages each year. For the most part, the use of ships taking part cargoes was made at the Irish ports, especially Waterford, with smaller numbers going from London and Bristol. After the outbreak of war in 1793, and combining with the decline in direct trade with Ireland by the firm, partial cargoes began to go more frequently from various English ports, such as London and Bristol (which had declined somewhat since 1787) and also from Liverpool, with a few going from Poole.

In the marketing of their fish, the firm tended to avoid sending partial cargoes on vessels owned or chartered by other merchants. They preferred to ship a large cargo of fish on a vessel chartered outright, knowing that their interests would be the first consideration. If need be the vessel chartered by Newman's could supplement its cargo with smaller amounts owned by other merchants. Reliance on chartered vessels for marketing seems to have developed after the end of the American War. At this time the firm used them to take shipments first to the ports of Portugal, and then more gradually to the ports of Northern and (more heavily) Southern Spain. After this relatively intensive use of chartered vessels, there

was a lull in their usage similar to the lull experienced in the shipment of partial cargoes. There followed, however, a slow development of more consistent and even heavier usage of their services again, almost all of it being concentrated to the Portuguese ports. (During the truce, 1802, there was a noticeable but temporary decline, the firm giving its ships their heaviest usage at this time.) In general, then, the ships which were available for charter and the ships which took out goods on freight were used, not necessarily consistently, but when they were most useful. Without their services there were many occasions when the firm would not have been able to fulfill adequately its dual role of supplying provisions and marketing fish.

Finances⁵³

In the preceding chapter a look at the firm's financial position through their profit and loss figures showed that, after a period of needing to borrow money in order to continue operating and to expand, the firm had by the 1790's completely overcome this. By the 1790's they were making such profits that they were not only no longer paying

⁵³This discussion on the finances of the firm is based on reading the letters of Robert Newman and Co. to the firm of Bodley, Eddy, and Bodley, London, throughout this period. See Newman Books No. 22/38, Reel E9; No. 23/39, Reel E10; and No. 26/45, Reel E11.

interest on borrowed money, but they were investing enough money to provide them with a considerable amount of additional income. They operated out of Dartmouth, and depended for their banking connections mainly on the firm of Bodley, Ety, and Bodley, of Lombard Street, London. The bankers managed investments and money matters both for the firm and for individual family members. During the latter half of the 1790's Newman's kept much of their reserve cash invested through Bodley, Ety, and Bodley in Navy Bills, Three Percents and Five Percents. These investments of reserve money also served the firm as security when their remittances from Portugal, from the sale of their fish cargoes, were either low, inadequate, or interrupted through unusual circumstances. Newman's would advance to Bodley, Ety, and Bodley a power of attorney authorizing them to sell amounts of stock equal to cover bills of exchange coming in against the firm's account. In ordinary times, the firm preferred not to sell these stocks merely for expediency and instead made use of Bodley, Ety, and Bodley's facilities for immediate access to funds either from the London firm itself or from their bankers.

During different periods of the year, Robert Newman and Company found that their financial needs were quite different.⁵⁴ Basically, at the latter end of the year, the firm often found that the bills of exchange issued against them came in more quickly than

⁵⁴ Again, this discussion of the finances of the firm are based on the firm's letters to Bodley, Ety, and Bodley, of London.

did their remittances from Portugal, where their fish cargoes had usually been sold. It therefore became essential that the Lombard Street firm pay much attention to their account at this time, advancing money if need be to keep their bills paid up. By January, the firm felt that it could begin to count on their remittances coming in from Portugal. However, different circumstances could delay the arrival of the bills and cash, and the firm might be obliged to borrow from Bodley's bankers up to several thousand pounds, for anything up to a two or three month period. This they preferred to do, especially when the funds in which their resources were invested were unlikely to yield a profit upon immediate selling. (A much less important, though no doubt effective method of investment which Newman's used, was the purchase of Lottery tickets, which as the date of the Lottery drew near, could be sold again at a profit.)⁵⁵ The Lombard street firm also undertook to collect bills issued against other firms on behalf of Newman's, the bills being presented to the issuer and sent on to Dartmouth if protested.

As for the continuing cycle of finances, by the month of March the firm would find itself straining to match up uncertain arrivals of remittances with the growing debts they made as they gathered supplies and equipment for shipment to the fishery for the following year. This situation was, however, normal and only temporary, and it would resolve itself by April or May with the continued arrival of last season's

⁵⁵ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Bodley, Ety, and Bodley, London, September 18, 1796. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

remittances and the slow-down of purchases for the coming season.

The complexity of the firm's dealings may be seen in an examination of their dealings with Bodley, Eddy, and Bodley during the war years of 1797 and 1798. By the first half of March, 1797, the firm at Dartmouth was sending to London for bank notes⁵⁶ which it hoped, but doubted, to pass off for cash in the payment of bills since cash was extremely scarce at the time. During this period of war the firm felt that it was essential that bank notes be made legal currency in the country, the lack of cash being very hard on those merchants who operated outside of the city of London. This effort to make use of bank notes must have had some success for the firm repeatedly sent to London for additional amounts with which to meet more bills.

During the month of April 1797 the firm found itself in need of money, and being unable to raise the amount themselves either with individuals or with a bank at a certain interest, they again resorted to issuing Bodley, Eddy, and Bodley with a power of attorney enabling the London firm to sell stock to the amount of an additional £5000, their remittances from Portugal having been delayed. As the month wore on, the firm continued to press their Portuguese correspondents to send remittances home as soon as possible.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ This paragraph is based on the letters which passed between Robert Newman and Company and Bodley, Eddy, and Bodley, of London during the month of March, 1797. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9. At the time there were two kinds of bank issues available, bank notes and bank post bills, Newman's preferring and making use of the latter.

⁵⁷ See Robert Newman and Company letter to Bodley, Eddy, and Bodley during month of April, 1797. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

By the end of June, the firm had either received or expected to receive shortly the overdue remittances and made plans on the manner of investing it. The rest of the summer was fairly quiet, as the fishery had already been supplied and the vessels had not begun to arrive back again. By the end of September the firm was again obliged to draw on the London firm, advising that their remittances should be available by the end of October, presumably those from early shipments made to market. At the end of the year the firm usually asked for and received a review of their current account along with a report of their investments with Bodley's, who in turn employed a broker to handle the purchasing and sale of stock and script for Newman's. The investments which were reported on at the end of 1797 were entered to the credit of H.N. (Holdsworth Newman?), to Lydston Newman, one of the major partners, and to Richard Newman, another of the major partners (Lydston seemingly being the most active in personal investments with the Lombard Street firm.)⁵⁸

By the spring of the following year, Newman's had been sent a cargo of dollars (specie) as remittances for some of their fish sales on Continental Europe. The dollars were then consigned to Bodley, seemingly not to repay them for any already incurred debts, but for them to invest to Newman's best advantage. Again this year the Dartmouth firm indulged

⁵⁸This paragraph has been based on the letters of Robert Newman and Co. to Bodley, Ety, and Bodley, from May to December, 1797. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

in speculating in some Irish tickets, with a view to selling them when the tickets would bring a profit. Lydston continued to invest in the Three Percents funds, seemingly as a private account. Newman's reviewed their accounts with the London firm on a twice-a-year basis, asking for a report up to the first of June. By the end of June the firm had received a second and larger cargo of dollars (9000 worth, as compared with the earlier 3000 worth). Once landed in England, the ship's captain normally deposited the remitted dollars in a bank until the firm to which they were consigned ordered their delivery elsewhere. Immediately the dollars arrived in England, Newman's wished to have them converted into the Three Percent funds, or in any other stocks which promised greater returns. In this instance they invested 1000 in the new Five Percents. They continued to juggle their investments in the light of information provided by Bodley's, this time selling debentures and putting an additional 1000-1500 in the new Five Percents. In the handling of their investments Newman's were heavily dependent upon the advice of the London firm, and though they indicated their general preferences (more or less general principles or guidelines) they left the actual activity of the investments to the London firm.⁵⁹

During late July of 1798, news reached the British public which upset the value of the funds in which the firm had invested. In spite of this, the firm felt the speculation to be sound and during the

⁵⁹The contents of this paragraph are based on the letters of Robert Newman and Company to Bodley, Ety, and Bodley, of London during the months of January to June, 1798. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

following month continued to invest in the same funds. In addition they expressed an interest in the Irish Five Percent funds. The firm worked on the principle of keeping their funds, which were in reserve, from being merely idle in the bank, actively investing in anything promising in the stock markets. During 1798 the firm seems to have made considerable investments again investing an additional £1000 in September. By October, things had again come full circle and the firm lacked ready cash with which to meet their obligations. Rather than sell the stock which they had acquired, they made arrangements with Bodley's to borrow £3000 for a period between three to six months. At this point Richard Newman, one of the major partners of the Dartmouth firm, seems to have also made a private investment of £2000 in the Three Percents.⁶⁰

Auxiliary Operations

Like other West Country firms operating in Newfoundland, Robert Newman and Company performed a number of miscellaneous functions, both in Newfoundland and in England. In Newfoundland, Newman's served as a channel for banking and investment for successful local planters. A planter might leave his money on deposit with the firm and draw a standard rate of interest on it.

At other times the firm arranged for the money in question to

⁶⁰ This final paragraph on the finances of Robert Newman and Co. is based on the letters of that firm to their Lombard Street advisers, Bodley, Eddy, and Bodley, London, from July to December, 1798. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

be invested by someone like their Lombard Street dealers, the papers being returned to the Newfoundland planters, Newman's sometimes being given a power of attorney on behalf of the planter.

Also in Newfoundland were a number of individuals who wished to have insurances (especially fire insurances) made upon their property and the firm obliged by making the necessary contacts in England. Thus, during 1797, Newman's arranged to make fire insurances on Williams' Plantation for the owner. Since they were obliged to pay ready money for the premium at the time of making the insurance, they asked of the owner that he oblige their St. John's agent with early payment as well.⁶¹

For England itself and for those living there the firm served as a vehicle through which to make contact with affairs in distant Newfoundland. A man wishing to lease land in Newfoundland, and being ignorant of the conditions of the premises, arranged through Newman's to have their local agent inspect the place and send a report back to the prospective leasor, This happened in 1805 when a Mr. Carwithin used the firm to help negotiate a lease.⁶² In the same year, the reverse situation also occurred with Peter McKie, resident in St. John's, using the firm to contact the English owner of a piece of land which he wished to lease in St. John's.⁶³

⁶¹ See for example Robert Newman and Co. letter to George Williams, St. John's, April 18, 1797. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁶² Robert Newman and Co. letter to John Congdon, 14 June, 1805. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

⁶³ Letter from Robert Newman and Co. to Peter McKie, 17 May, 1805. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

During periods of war, the firm often attempted to assist those who had been unlucky enough to have been captured by the enemy, by advancing money to them, or by putting them in touch with their friends or relatives. That they did this not only for their own employees but for others as well, can be seen from the following two examples, one from each of the wars of the period under study. In the middle of the American War Captain Wm. Nichols wrote to Henry Laurens, a newly freed prisoner and his friend:

My worthy friend Richard Caines Esq. have written to Robert Newman and Co. to supply you with whatever money you may want on my a/c if you should be gone from Dartmouth where I am informed you now are This will be forwarded to you by Messrs. Newman & Co.⁶⁴

During 1797, while England and France were again at war, the firm attempted to get letters through to some men who had been captured by the French, men who were friends of another gentleman of Dartmouth. In this case, the firm had heard that some of the people of Jersey had means of getting such letters through to the prisoners and they forwarded the letters to their correspondent in Jersey, Thomas Mallet, asking his co-operation in making the contact, "any postage please to debit to us."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Stephens Facsimile Manuscripts, No. 947, Captain William Nichols to Henry Laurens, Falmouth, Oct. 7, 1780. PRO State Papers Domestic. George III, V 95.

⁶⁵ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Thomas Mallet, Jersey, April 8, 1797. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

CHAPTER V11

CONCLUSION

The relative importance of a commercial firm may be seen in at least two ways; first, its durability in a temporal sense and second, the proportionate amount of an industry handled by the particular firm. Newman's connection with the fishery was unique, the family being involved for roughly 400 years.¹ Perhaps more important as a measure of the firm's significance, however, is their comparative size. When the total exports of the firm, from 1780-1806, are compared in the following table to the totals exported by all merchants involved in the trade, Newman's can be seen to control anywhere from two to nine percent.² In the early years after the end of the American War the firm's share of the trade was relatively high, decreasing as the number of participants increased and as the boom resulted in higher total catches for the whole industry. This decreasing share of the total trade during the mid-1780's can be seen also as a reflection of the relative caution or lack of expansion which the firm exercised in this period of generally rapid expansion. Experienced men must have known that

¹Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Company, 1951, p.7.

²See Table 40, p. 143.

TABLE 40

Comparison of Newman's Total Exports with Totals for Newfoundland³

Year	Quintals Exported		
	Newman's	Newfoundland	Newman's %
1780	6,819	-	-
1781	10,024	-	-
1782	18,027	-	-
1783	12,849	-	-
1784	23,253	497,884	4.67
1785	22,684	606,276	3.74
1786	20,579	585,897	3.51
1787	17,562	732,216	2.41
1788	15,881	776,480	2.05
1789	20,257	782,791	2.59
1790	17,393	632,656	2.75
1791	22,340	532,570	4.19
1792	17,375	452,402	3.84
1793	17,480	457,618	3.82
1794	26,688	698,325	3.82
1795	16,533	379,249	4.36
1796	19,543	-	-
1797	18,057	318,621	5.67
1798	21,152	-	-
1799	25,211	-	-
1800	29,053	-	-
1801	29,536	314,917	9.38
1802	25,781	-	-
1803	25,576	582,849	4.39
1804	27,059	559,442	4.84
1805	25,105	625,519	4.01
1806	-	772,809	-

³This table has been compiled from Newman Company Ledgers 1780-1796 and 1796-1806 for Newman's totals and from the Newfoundland Consolidated Census Returns 1698-1833 for Newfoundland totals.

the trade could only expand to limited proportions without glutting the markets. A few years of financial restrictions also encouraged them not to expand during this period. As an example of this lack of expansion, between 1784 and 1788 while the volume of fish exports for the whole island increased, the firm's exports did not maintain a similar increase, and in fact experienced some decrease. As the 1789-1791 crash period weeded out those who were less firmly established and those who had over-extended their resources, the firm's relative importance again rose. With the revival of the fishery during the early years of the 1790's, the firm's share of the total fish trade kept pace with the growing total catch and for the firm this was a period of relative expansion. However, it was during the years of the war with France that the firm began to assume a position of increasing importance.⁴ During the year 1795 the firm was badly hit by the hostilities⁵ and this affected its exports, the total being reduced by about one third. In spite of this, they were surviving better than the fishery as a whole and their place in the strained economy was greater than ever, their exports showing a slight increase generally for the

⁴This, too, can be seen in Table 40, page 198, though the figures for some years unfortunately are not available.

⁵During 1795 the firm lost the Brig Live Oak, the Dispatch was damaged, and the Somme was captured (though after being used as a transport vessel for prisoners by the French, the latter was eventually released). Also a frequent occurrence while ships were on the high seas was the plundering of cargoes by the enemy.

next six years. During the relatively poor year of 1801 the firm's share of exports from Newfoundland reached an all-time high for the period, rising to almost ten percent of the total. During the early years of the new century the firm consolidated its share of the fishery's exports, annually exporting a higher percentage than it had in pre-war years. By 1806 Robert Newman and Company had survived a period of great stress and had emerged with a greater share of the total trade than when this period began.

Newman's ability to cope successfully with the difficult years of the late eighteenth century seems to have been the result of a combination of advantages over most other firms, an initial advantage, a lucky break, and an acquired advantage. Briefly, its sheer size was a built-in advantage over many other firms, and the fact that its main markets and connections were in Portugal, which alone remained open to Newfoundland, is during much of this period proved to be a very lucky circumstance. Its final advantage over other firms in the trade seems to have been the very high quality of its management. That this last factor remained a constant over much of the life of the firm can be seen in the remarks of another student of the firm during the nineteenth century. He comments:

Newman and Company survived in Newfoundland for so long chiefly because of their ruthless efficiency in dealing with their agents, their painstaking scrutiny and careful examination of their account books, and their specific and detailed instructions regarding all matters.⁶

During this period it was also apparent in their quick and imaginative responses to the everyday difficulties of the trade, during both war and peace, and in the decisions it made in the alteration of long term patterns to create newer, more viable ones.

It must immediately be recognized that the very size of the firm, the fact that it commanded large resource, was one of its initial advantages over a number of smaller firms, an advantage shared, of course, with other firms of similar scale. It has already been pointed out that the Newman firm was considered to be among the most powerful traders in Newfoundland.⁷ It has also been pointed out that the firm not only managed to survive this difficult period, but also managed to increase its relative and absolute size. But this is not to say that the firm repeatedly ran a profitable venture during the years between 1780 and 1806. Reference to earlier tables⁸ shows that losses were incurred by the firm in varying amounts and in various parts of their operations. Losses were made by the Newfoundland Stores Account (the supply trade), by the Cod and Seal Oil Account (mostly exports to Britain, as well as by the Cod Fish Account (exports to Continental markets) and by a number of smaller accounts (including individual

⁶S. Ryan, "The Newfoundland Cod Fishery", p. 95.

⁷See Table 13, page 42.

⁸See tables 19, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33.

ships' accounts). These combined to give loss entries for the total operations of the firm for a number of years. Reference to Table 19 at this point is merely to point out that, in spite of considerable losses over a number of sometimes consecutive years, the firm was never obliged to discontinue functioning. Indeed at various points during the period the firm made loans to others.⁹ Also, allowing for fluctuations arising out of short term conditions, the value of goods which made up the supply trade increased, the value and amounts of fish and oil exported increased, and the numbers and tonnage of ships operated by the firm increased as well.¹⁰ This advantage of size enabled the firm to survive when a number of smaller firms were crushed.¹¹

Markets

Though the advantage of size may help to explain why the firm survived when a number of smaller firms did not, it does not explain why Newman's survived better than a number of other firms of similar size. Perhaps their most obvious advantage over a number of large firms was the fact that their traditional market in Europe was Portugal.

⁹ Loans were made by the firm both to men who were in the Newfoundland trade and to some who were not. See for example Name Files for Benson, Bailey, and Perring, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹⁰ See Tables 20, 24, 25, 34, 35 and 38.

¹¹ See for example the Name Files for Thomey, Tremlett, Brooks, and Follett, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

A certain amount of fish and oil was shipped back to British Europe, but the greatest bulk of their fish was shipped to the Portuguese markets, with only occasional cargoes going into Spain and Italy. This tendency to produce for specific markets with Continental Europe can be noted of many large exporters of Newfoundland cod. Thus, Benjamin Lester of Trinity dealt heavily in the Italian market¹² while Saunders and Sweetman dealt primarily in the markets of Southern Spain.¹³ This dependence upon Portugal as its main market can be seen as an initial advantage since, during the hostilities of this period, of the European markets involved Portugal alone was secure for much of the time.

Entry into Spain and Italy was severely restricted and for much of the time impossible. This is not to say that those who dealt traditionally in Portugal experienced no difficulties, for fish kept out of Spain and Italy flooded into Portugal, upsetting the equilibrium of supplies and demand and causing drastic fluctuations in prices. Nevertheless, at a time like this, knowledge of the individual market ports within Portugal, a product meeting the sometimes detailed specifications for local demand, and strong connections with a trusted distribution firm gave a strong advantage to an experienced firm competing with those trying to enter the same market as a last alternative.

¹²Benjamin Lester File, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

¹³Saunders and Sweetman Files, Maritime History Group, Memorial University, St. John's.

During this period, Newman's sent the bulk of their fish to the Oporto-Viana area in the north of Portugal as they had been doing for many years. Thus, their fish exports were designed especially for this market, met local requirements, and were well known in the area. Newman's could also expect to receive the most favourable distribution possible for their fish cargoes, since their agent at both these ports was Newman and Land, the family's other main business activity. This firm had long been established in the area and had developed a wide range of experience in local demands. This firm's major business was the cultivation of vineyards and the production of wines, the distribution of Robert Newman and Company fish being secondary.¹⁴ But, increasingly as the period wore on, ships which had discharged fish at either Oporto or Viana for Robert Newman and Company tended to take on at least partial cargoes of Newman and Land wines for sale in England, Newfoundland, or North America.¹⁵ Thus, it was in the best interests of Newman and Land to dispose of Robert Newman and Company fish to the best possible advantage.

In an attempt to assess the importance of this market advantage, the following table has been developed. The exports referred to are obtained by adding the totals exported to the markets of British Europe to the amounts exported to the combined markets of

¹⁴ Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Company, p. 11.

¹⁵ This can be seen in the individual ships' accounts for this period.

TABLE 41

Exports to British Europe, Spain, Portugal, Italy¹⁶

<u>Year</u>	<u>Totals in Quintals</u>		<u>Newman's %</u>
	<u>Newman's</u>	<u>Nfld.</u>	
1793	17,480	414,839	4.21
1794	26,688	637,621	4.19
1795	16,533	350,507	4.71
1797	18,057	283,616	6.37
1801	27,036	152,039	17.71
1805	25,576	484,157	5.28
1804	27,059	466,926	5.71
1805	24,563	443,272	5.54

¹⁶ Newman's exports were compiled from individual cargoes sent to market either in British Europe or to the Continent. Exports for the whole island were taken from the Newfoundland Consolidated Census Returns 1698-1833 as compiled by S. Ryan.

Spain, Portugal and Italy. This combination of markets was used because Newmans did ship some fish back to Britain, while almost all the rest of their fish went specifically into Portugal. Other large firms are known to have followed much the same pattern, sending a little to Britain, while sending the bulk to either Spain, Portugal, or Italy. To see the firm's comparative size in these markets, their exports are compared to the exports for the total trade, i.e. all other merchants combined. Unfortunately, the availability of figures for the totals of the whole island's exports to specific markets is limited. Those that are available are given in Table 41. In this Table it can be seen that the firm's share of this market during 1793-1795 runs at a little over four percent, which is about one half percent higher than its share of all markets combined, as was seen in Table 40, page 198. During these early years of the war with France, the increasing difficulties of those firms mainly dependent upon the Spanish and Italian markets gave Robert Newman and Company an increasingly important share of Newfoundland's total exports, though in absolute terms their exports suffered some decline. Perhaps the most obvious instance of this relative rate of survival can be seen in the figures for 1801. During this year the firm shipped out a considerable cargo, though only an increase of 400 quintals over their previous year's exports. During the same year the combined total for all merchants exports dropped drastically and the firm's share of the European markets rose as a consequence to a high of almost 18 percent, an amazing figure for one firm. This is especially so when

It is remembered that about 96 percent of this was shipped out on the firm's own vessels. The importance of the accessibility of the Spanish and Italian markets can be seen in the figures for 1803-1805. The reopening of Spain and Italy had allowed other firms to regain their portion of the market and Newman's share is noticeably lower than it had been in either 1797 or 1801. Yet, this advantage during the years of closed markets elsewhere had enabled Newman's to gain a larger share of the European markets than it had had before the war began.

Management

During this period the management of the firm was in the hands of the Newman brothers, Robert, Richard, and Lydston. Between them they maintained a firm hand over all operations, in Newfoundland in England, at the markets, and at sea. Minor details of management that they could not handle because of distance and uncertainty were left to employees, especially their Newfoundland agents. But, unlike other firms at this time, Newman's did not turn their Newfoundland agents into partners and the agents were kept under tight rein, disobedience being punished with dismissal.

The partners of the firm aggressively applied themselves to business affairs and were quick to take opportune advantage of any situation which arose. For example, the expulsion of the French from St. Pierre made the firm aware that it might be possible to get rooms there, if they were offered by the Government. These they would have

been glad to take up since they could be kept during the winter at little expense. It also meant that during the following spring the firm would have the option of keeping it or selling¹⁷ They repeatedly wrote to their employees with suggested alternatives, just in case something should turn up, or the general conditions, either of war or peace, should change. For example, during the French War they wrote to their captains to suggest "should it happen that a peace take place before you get away (from the market area) it may be worth while for you to go to Toulon... and there you may perhaps purchase one or more (captured English ships)."¹⁸ They were also not above creating their own opportunity and they remarked to Wm. Dawe, on June 8, 1805 "if you send goods to Newfoundland you must inform us the contents... sometimes in weighing off stores a guinea properly applied hath great effect..."¹⁹

Their apparent disregard for the legalities of some situations, provided they were advantageous, can be seen in the following letter sent to their correspondent at Cadiz, Strange Brothers and Co., Nov 1, 1795:

¹⁷Robert Newman and Co. letter to William Woilcott, May 13, 1794. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

¹⁸Robert Newman and Co. letter to A Lyon, June 26, 1795. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

¹⁹Robert Newman and Co. letter to William Dawe, June 8, 1805. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

(re captured vessels) and we repeat our request of purchasing a good vessel for our trade ... with respect to the difficulty of making them free here we cannot speak positively, but we will risk it wishing it to be done in this manner ... when the ship is condemned a Spaniard should buy her - not an English subject - we should make sale again for her to you - if possible - or some proof as to being English built ... at any rate we will run the risk...²⁰

The partners also aggressively applied themselves to minimize the hazards of wartime. One of their main expenses caused by war was the higher and higher rates of insurance premiums. To beat the high rates, the firm used safer, if less convenient, routes. When it seemed judicious they went without convoy. They tried to sail with larger crews or with more guns, both of which circumstances entitled them to premium discounts. When driven to extremes they ran their ships uncovered by any insurance, or ran without convoy, risking all on a safe and fortunate passage. Perhaps their favorite personal solution to the problem of capture by the enemy was the provision of a set of alternate ship's papers, which would show the vessel to be American. This was cunningly supplemented by props such as American Newspapers scattered around the Captain's cabin, etc. The firm used this method quite successfully and by November, 1796, the firm could write to R. Whitfield to report that "American papers ... hath passed four of our vessels this summer."²¹

²⁰ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Strange Brothers and Co., Cadiz, November 1, 1795. Newman Book No. 22/38. Reel E9.

²¹ Robert Newman and Co. letter to R. Whitfield, November 1796. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

Another of the problems created by war was the shortage of labour. The problem was actively attacked by using foreigners when they were available, and by cheating the press gang as much as possible. To this end, they candidly advised their captains to secrete any men who were over the limit allowed to each vessel, to disguise some of their seamen as passengers, to hide crewmen as they came in to port, or to land some of them ashore before they actually came in to dock.²² In Newfoundland itself the scattered nature of the fishery made the firm realize, not only the value of actively assisting in official defence plans, but also the necessity for their agents to have prepared plans to cache away goods and materials in secret places that would escape destruction if the enemy successfully took over their premises.

Another of the elements guiding the management of the firm was the principle of selective merchant co-operation. In the most general sense the firm depended on its regular correspondents not only for information, but also for practical help, and, as well, for their advice and opinions on local matters. When their correspondents failed to give satisfactory service, the firm felt free not only to change to another correspondent within the same port, but also to change ports. The firm was, of course, particularly co-operative and dependent upon the firm which handled its money and investments, and the degree

²² Robert Newman and Co. letters to various captains throughout these years. Newman Books Nos. 22/38, Reel E9; 23/39, Reel E10; 26/45, Reel E11 and 54/77, Reel E27.

of good will cultivated is evident in their correspondence. Trust and co-operation with a given firm was sometimes such that, with the death of the senior partner, the relationship was inherited by the succeeding partners. Within England the firm felt itself able to write candidly to other merchant firms in other ports, seeking to present a united front in the face of government regulation and interference in their trade.²³

It is within the Newfoundland context that merchant co-operation by Newman's was most selective. Merchants established in an area would recognize a definite sphere of influence and would consult to determine fish prices and to supply each other when shortages occurred. This is remembered in Newfoundland as perhaps the most obnoxious characteristic of the merchant group. However, it must be remembered that often co-operation between merchants was a united front against outsiders, against merchants with no 'rights' in their area. The local merchants could sometimes be induced to offer higher prices to the fishermen to prevent strangers from purchasing all the fish in the area. Mostly, however, it was co-operative resistance to new operators, roving peddlars especially, who were felt to be encroaching on established territory.²⁴ The irregular appearance

²³The above discussion is based on letters to many correspondents over this period. Newman Books Nos. 22/38, Reel E9; 23/39, Reel E10; 26/45, Reel E11.

²⁴Ibid.

of peddlars along the coast, taking off fish for which supplies and equipment had been advanced months before, created an interruption in the regular supplying of an area by permanently involved merchant, and bred mutual distrust between the local merchant and the local fishermen.

Changing Orientation of the Firm

As the eighteenth century moved into its final decades the Newfoundland trade, since its inception a migratory fishery, began a transformation permanently into a sedentary fishery. This was a fundamental change and required extensive adaptation on the part of the merchants who were involved. The decline or disappearance on the part of many merchants indicates that many of them did not respond strongly enough to the changing fishery. However, Robert Newman and Co. of Dartmouth, the subject of this study and one of the oldest firms in the trade, came out of this period remarkably successful. By 1806 they were not only running a larger operation than they had in 1780, but they were also in control of a larger share of the entire trade. Without any doubt, the firm's success must be seen in the light of a major decision made by the firm's management at the end of the American War. This decision marked a permanent change of direction and orientation for the firm as long as it remained in the Newfoundland trade. This was their recognition that, after almost two hundred years of migratory fishing, the future was instead to be with the supply trade to the resident fishermen, as it had been most

conspicuously during the years of the war with America.

That the management of Robert Newman and Co. recognized the long term changes to be made by former migratory fishing merchants became apparent after the end of the American Revolutionary War. Tangible evidence of this came in their move to the South Coast of the island among a developing residential fishery, in the increase in the number of distribution points they maintained in Newfoundland, and in the disappearance of the fishing vessels from their fleet altogether.

That the move to the South Coast with its residential fishery was recognized as an important decision for the firm can be seen in the presence of at least one of the partners in Newfoundland for several years to supervise the details, for by this time the major partners themselves had ceased to come regularly to Newfoundland. This move to the South Coast was mainly for the opportunity to supply the local fishermen who were creating a residential fishery there, and though the firm continued to do some fishing for itself, the amount declined. The move was made in 1784 to St. Lawrence on the Burin Peninsula, where concerted efforts were made to set up residents to fish in return for supplies issued by Newman's. In their eagerness to set up fishermen and to gain some degree of control over them, the firm issued a huge amount of supplies, in return for which they collected about 20 percent of the total collected at their older establishment.

This move, and the heavy investment it meant for a number of years in the building up of a barter exchange system, seems to have put considerable strain on the firm. While the island itself was going

through a period of rapid expansion on the part of many firms, Newman's were forced to proceed much more slowly, the expansion of 1784 apparently having been almost to the limit of its capacity. This was probably fortunate, for those who were, for the most part, eliminated from the trade by the glut of 1789-1791 had continued to expand right up to the end of the boom period. It was just as these men were eliminated or declined that Newman's were getting over the need for excessive caution, and were able to take advantage of a new situation. It is at this point, when most of the island's merchants were still experiencing difficulties caused by the crash, that Newman's again went through a period of expansion. This may not have been as planned a development as the previous one, but it continued in the same direction. In 1793 the firm opened two new establishments on the South Coast, one to the north of St. Lawrence (Burin) and one to the westward (Little Bay). The establishment at Burin did not prove to be satisfactory and that operation was discontinued after a few years. From then until the end of the century the firm apparently expanded no further, preferring to consolidate its holdings. The firm's periods of expansion thus do not seem to coincide with any general periods of expansion within the Newfoundland trade. Perhaps in that very fact lies some of the relative success of the firm, a fact attributable partly to unavoidable circumstances, and partly to their own conscious decisions.

The changing orientation of the firm's activities, apparent in their move to new premises on the South Coast, was accompanied by a

change in their shipping needs. The majority of their vessels could no longer be allowed to spend the whole season in Newfoundland before making the return trip back across the Atlantic. In their new need to get more supplies in and more fish out, the partners were forced both to diversify the composition of their fleet and to make better use of it through new and wider patterns of movement. In spite of losses, the partners continued to increase the size of the firm's fleet, and went into both complete and partial ownership of vessels. They heightened their usage of ships owned by others, allowing themselves valuable flexibility, as well as additional carrying capacity. During this period they allowed the role of their fishing vessels to become inferior to that of cargo-carrying vessels, and built up a group of coasters to fulfill new needs of inter-premises communication, and greater contact with the North American mainland. Thus, the change in orientation towards the supply trade reverberated throughout the firm's entire operations.

A look at the Newman family's social position will show briefly and concisely what this period meant to them. At the beginning of the 1780's the Newmans were a well-known merchant family with a long history of involvement with the Newfoundland trade. Within the Dartmouth area they were important merchants, but they remained merchants only, unable to mingle successfully with the local gentry of the Dartmouth area. Throughout this critical period, when failures

were many, Newman's prospered as they had never done before. Socially it was the work of this generation that enabled the family to rise above their centuries-old position of being merchants only. Because of the profits realized during this period, and particularly during the latter half of the 1790's the younger generations, born in manor houses and living on large estates, became part of the gentry. They became large land owners, obtained inheritable titles, and provided a Governor and a Deputy-Governor for the all powerful Bank of England,²⁴ quite an accomplishment for a provincial merchant family.

The Newman firm's financial success during this period of the late eighteenth century set the stage for one final, very successful century in the Newfoundland trade. Closing down their St. John's branch early in the nineteenth century, Newman's spread their establishments across the south coast. One of the last of the old style fishing firms, through their control over supplies and the shipment of fish, they dominated the lives of generations of Newfoundlanders who lived on the South Coast. While deploring the extent of merchant influence on the coast, one writer in 1877 was obliged to add: "These establishments, however, give an importance to the bay, and are of considerable advantage to the population in affording²⁵ them facilities for obtaining a livelihood." The Newman family, through its various firms, remained a constant feature in Newfoundland life until almost 1900.

²⁴The Story and Origin of Hunt, Roope and Co., p. 21

²⁵P. R. Toque, Newfoundland, As It Was And As It Is In 1877, p: 186

APPENDIX 1

Newman Material on Microfilm¹

<u>Reel No.</u>		<u>Volume No.</u>
E1	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, CASH BOOK 1775-1795	1/2
E1	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, CASH BOOK 1780-1789	2/3
E1	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, CASH BOOK 1789-1795	3/6
E1	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, CASH BOOK 1795-1802 (continued on next film: E2)	4/7
E2	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, CASH BOOK 1803-1810	5/8
E2	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LEDGER 1774-1781	6/9
E3	John Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LEDGER 1776-1781	7/10
E3	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LEDGER 1780-1796 (continued on the next film: E4)	8/4
E4	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LEDGER 1796-1806 (continued on next film: E5)	9/10
E5	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LEDGER 1806-1814	10/12
E5	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, JOURNAL 1786-1791 (continued on the next film E6)	11/13
E6	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, JOURNAL 1791-1796	12/14
E6	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, JOURNAL 1797-1802 (continued on next film: E7)	13/15
E7	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, JOURNAL 1802-1806 (continued on next film: E8)	14/16

¹This has been taken from the initial reel of the Newman microfilms at the Newfoundland Provincial Archives, Military Road, St. John's.

<u>Reel No.</u>		<u>Volume No.</u>
E8	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, JOURNAL 1806-1811	15/17
E8	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, WASTE BOOK 1811-1813	16/21 (pp. 315-408)
E8	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, CLOTHING BOOK 1783-1787	17/31
E8	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LITTLE BAY LEDGER, Newfoundland, 1790-1791	19/33
E9	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, ACCOUNTS CURRENT AND INVOICE BOOK 1798-1809	20/34
E9	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, SERVANTS LEDGER 1806-1811	21/34A
E9	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LETTER BOOK 1794-1799 (duplicated on Film E12)	22/38
E10	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LETTER BOOK 1804-1810 (duplicated on Film E12)	23/39
E10	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, JOURNAL: ST. LAWRENCE, NEWFOUNDLAND GOODS SUPPLIED 1788-1789 CASH BOOK 1800-1801 (continued on next film: E11)	24/57A
E11	Hunt, Roope & Company, Oporto, ACCOUNTS 1776-1788 "PRIVATE JOURNAL KEPT BY J. NEWMAN WHEN RESIDING IN OPORTO"	25/40
E11	Hunt, Roope & Company, Oporto, LETTER BOOK 1793-1794	26/45
E12	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LETTER BOOK 1794-1799 (duplicate, see E9)	22/38
E12	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth, LETTER BOOK 1804-1810 (duplicate of E10)	23/39
E13	Hunt, Roope & Company, Oporto, LETTER BOOK 1793-1794 (duplicate of E11)	26/45
E13	Hunt, Roope & Company, Oporto, LETTER BOOK 1808-1809	27/46

<u>Reel No.</u>		<u>Volume No.</u>
E13	- Newman & Roope, London, ORDER BOOK 1794-1799	28/41
E13	- Hunt, Roope, Teage & Company, London, LETTERS TO HUNT, ROOPE & COMPANY, Oporto, 1820-1832, (continued on next film: E14)	29/47
E14	- Hunt, Roope, Teage & Company, London, LETTERS TO HUNT, ROOPE & COMPANY, Oporto, 1835-1839	30/48
E14	- Hunt, Roope, Teage & Company, London, LETTERS TO HUNT, ROOPE & COMPANY, Oporto, 1839-1844 (continued on next film: E15)	31/49
E15	- Hunt, Roope, Teage & Company, London, LETTERS TO HUNT, ROOPE & COMPANY, Oporto, 1844-1853	32/50
E15	- Hunt, Roope, Teage & Company, London, LETTERS TO HUNT, ROOPE & COMPANY, Oporto, 1853-1875	33/51
E15	- Hunt, Roope, Teage & Company, London, LETTERS TO HUNT, ROOPE & COMPANY, Oporto, 1881-1895	34/52
E17	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1839-1844 (continued on next film: E18)	38/61
E18	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1844-1850	39/62
E18	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1850-1858 (continued on next film: E19)	40/63
E19	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1858-1865	41/64
E19	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1866-1872 (continued on next film: E20)	42/65
E20	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1872-1878	43/66
E20	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1878-1884	44/67
E21	- Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1881-1855	67/98

<u>Reel No.</u>		<u>Volume No.</u>
E21	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1882-1894	68/94
E21	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1886-1890	69/100
E22	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1889-1894	46/69
E22	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1894-1899	47/70
E22	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, OBSERVATIONS ON NEWFOUNDLAND WANTS 1876-	48/65A
E22	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1794-1796 (continued on next film: E23)	49/72
E23	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1796-1800 (continued on next film: E24)	50/73
E24	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1799-1807 (continued on next film: E25)	51/74
E25	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1800-1803 (continued on next film: E26)	52/75
E26	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1803-1805 (continued on next film: E27)	53/76
E27	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1810-1812	54/77
E27	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1812-1820 (continued on next film: E28)	55/78
E28	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1813-1815 (continued on next film: E29)	56/79
E29	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1820-1822	57/80
E30	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1822-1824	58/81
E30	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1824-1826 (continued on next film: E31)	59/82

<u>Reel No.</u>		<u>Volume No.</u>
E31	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1826-1829 (continued on next film: E32)	60/83
E32	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1829-1832 (continued on next film: E33)	61/84
E33	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1884-1888	62/85
E33	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, GENERAL LETTER BOOK 1888-1892 (continued on next film: E34)	63/86
E34	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1812-1828	64/95
E34	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1833-1838 (continued on next film: E35)	65/96
E35	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1846-1850	66/97
E35	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1881-1885 (duplicate, see E21)	67/98
E36	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1878-1884 (duplicate see E20)	44/67
E36	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1884-1889	45/68
E36	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1889-1894	46/69
E37	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1886-1890 (duplicate, see E21)	69/100
E37	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, FOREIGN LETTERS 1890-1896	70/101
E37	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, PARTICULARS OF VOYAGES 1839-1896	71/92
E37	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, SHIPS REGISTERS 1840-1870	72/93

<u>Reel No.</u>		<u>Volume No.</u>
E37	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, SHIPS CREWS 1864-1896 (continued on next film: E38)	73/94
E38	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS	
E39	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth CASH BOOK 1789-1795 (duplicate, see Film 8) (continued on next film: E40)	3/6
E39	Robert Newman & Company, Dartmouth CASH BOOK 1795-1802 (duplicate, see films E1-2) (continued on E40)	4/7
E39	Robert Newman & Company, London, CLOTHING BOOK 1792-1795	18/32
E40	Hunt, Roope & Company, Oporto, LETTER BOOK 1808-1809 (duplicate, see E13)	27/46
E40	Newman & Roope, London, ORDER BOOK 1794-1799 (duplicate, see E13)	28/41
E40	Newman, Hunt & Company, London, NEWFOUNDLAND LETTER BOOK 1878-1884 (duplicate see E20)	44/67

APPENDIX 2

MEASURING UNITS USED BY NEWMAN'S 1780-1800

There is quite some difficulty experienced by the modern reader in the understanding of eighteenth century units of measurement. In dealing with Newman's Newfoundland Stores Accounts the terms mentioned below are to be found. Where I have been able to find explanatory notes in the firm's letter books, or in more recent works, the information has been included.

Salt

One of the more difficult commodities to understand during this period, in terms of units of measurement, is the essential commercial salt - necessary to convert the fresh-caught cod into a durable, marketable product. The Newfoundland Stores Accounts do not list cargoes most of the time by unit of measurement. In spite of this, there are specific references to nine different measuring units to describe cargoes of salt. These include the barrel, charges, hogshead, lasts, milh^s, modjns, moys, razas, and salms. The barrel, at least in English terms, was a measure of capacity for both wet and dry products. It was a nearly cylindrical wooden vessel, generally wider in the middle

than at the ends, its length exceeding its width.¹ English references generally mention liquids by the barrel, ranging from 30 to 32 gallons per barrel depending upon the commodity.² No mention is given of salt per barrel, Newman's use of this term as a measure for salt is infrequent, appearing occasionally during 1787, 1788, and 1791.

The charge was a measure of capacity usually weighing $1\frac{1}{2}$ Cwt., i.e. hundred weight, but occasionally weighing $2\frac{1}{2}$ Cwt. or 9-quarter Cwt.³ This does not really give much information since the hundred weight was not necessarily 100 pounds for all commodities, being quite often 112 pounds, and indeed being 124 for salt fish.⁴ English references do not specifically mention salt per charge. It was evidently in use in Portugal and at Normantier, France since the firm had cargoes of salt measured in charges arriving from these places. Again, this measure was used by the firm very infrequently, appearing only during 1787 and 1789.

The hogshead was used by the firm in describing their cargoes of salt with similar infrequency, but occasionally during the early 1780's hogsheads of salt came into their Newfoundland premises. Once again, in 1800 there is mention of hogsheads of salt arriving. The

¹R.E. Zupko, Dictionary of English Weights and Measures From Anglo-Saxon Times to the Nineteenth Century, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968, p. 13.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 37.

⁴Ibid., p. 80.

hogshead appears to have been a measure of capacity for many products,⁵ but I was unable to find how much salt it contained.

During 1784 and immediately preceding the opening of the war with France in 1793, and once yet again in 1804, Newman's received cargoes of salt measured in terms of lasts - a last of salt is recognized as 10 Weys or 420 bushels, i.e. 148.00 hektoliters. Several of these cargoes originated in Cadiz, Spain.⁶

The most common term by far used as a unit of measurement for salt arriving at the firm's Newfoundland Stores was abbreviated as milh⁵. At least some of these cargoes were originating at the Portuguese port of Oporto. In English lists of weights and measurements I am unable to find any reference to this term. However, it seems to be a Portuguese word based on "mil" which seems to be a prefix for thousand.⁷ Therefore it is possible that a milh of salt is 1000 pounds of salt. The firm's incoming cargoes often list the numbers of milh⁵ in single digits, for example 6 milh⁵ or 8 milh⁵ which I would take to mean about 6000 or 8000 pounds of salt. It is possible that one of the other terms used to describe a quantity of salt, the Razas, is a sub-unit of the milh⁵ for the only place where it appears it is entered at 7 milh⁵ and 30 Razas. It seems likely that this is a Portuguese word, for the Portuguese "rasa" is a measure of grain, salt or the

⁵Ibid., pp. 78-79.

⁶Ibid., p. 97.

⁷James L. Taylor, A Portuguese-English Dictionary Revised, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1970, p. 422.

like.⁸

The other most common unit of measurement for salt during this period is the moy. This would appear from English sources to be related to the bushel, and though it appears to have fallen from common use, it was assumed in 1901 to be roughly equivalent to the bushel.⁹ However, since the bushel was a measure of capacity for many dry products, its capacity and weight varied from place to place.¹⁰ I could not find any references to salt by the bushel in English sources and in Spanish the reference to a moyo states that it is equal to 32 gallons,¹¹ or equal to 258 litres when used for wine, while in Galicia, it is a dry measure.¹²

The final two terms used to describe quantities of salt are modins and salms. The only reference to salms seems to be from the Spanish. In Spanish sal is the word for salt¹³ and the word salma is a feminine noun meaning ton.¹⁴ One would guess that a salm of salt

⁸Ibid., p. 534.

⁹A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, Oxford, 1901, Vol. VI, Part II, p. 732.

¹⁰A Dictionary of English Weights and Measures, pp. 25-27.

¹¹Velazquez de la Cadena, A New Pronouncing Dictionary of the Spanish and English Languages, New York, 1973, pp. 450.

¹²Diccionario de la lengua Espanola, p. 900.

¹³E.B. Williams, Spanish and English Dictionary, revised edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1967, p. 514 (Spanish Section).

¹⁴Ibid., p. 515.

would perhaps equal a ton. The use of this term is not too frequent, and it appears to have been used during the years 1789 and 1795, one of the shipments coming from Trepani, Sicily. Cargoes of salt measured in modins appear during the boom year 1786 and again during 1789. In 1786 the shipment arrived from Lanat, France and in the latter year from Alicante in Southern Spain. The Spanish modio was a measure of many items, especially dry commodities, and equal to two Castilian celemines.¹⁵ The Castilian celemine, in turn, was equal to four cuartillos,¹⁶ which in its turn was a measure for dry things and was equal to 1.56 litres.¹⁷ Therefore one modio was equal to 8 cuartillos, or roughly 12.5 litres.

Liquors

During the latter years of the eighteenth century, the firm imported amounts of wines, rum, and British spirits. Rum is usually entered by the gallon, occasionally by the Puncheon. A difficulty arises in computing the rum gallon since there were at least two different gallons, the 282 cubic inch ale gallon, and the 231 cubic inch wine gallon,¹⁸ neither of which specifically mentions rum. I

¹⁵ Real Academia Espanola, Diccionario de la Lengua Espanola, Madrid, 1956, p. 886.

¹⁶ Diccionario Critico Etimologico de la Lengua Castellana, J. Corominas, Editorial Francke, Berna, Switzerland, 1970, vol. 1, p. 753.

¹⁷ Spanish and English Dictionary, Spanish Section, p. 162.

¹⁸ Dictionary of English Weights and Measures, pp. 69-71.

suspect that it would be denser than wine and closer to the ale gallon. The puncheon, on the other hand, was a measuring capacity in the form of a large wooden vessel resembling a cask. Again, no reference of gallons of rum per puncheon is made but the denser beer had only 72 gallons per puncheon compared to 84 gallons per puncheon for the lighter wine.¹⁹ British Spirits were also bought by the puncheon.

French wine is entered once in the remarks of the Newfoundland Stores Accounts in terms of legars and hogsheads. The legar is probably a French measure, but I have been unable to find a descriptive account of it. The hogshead was normally 63 gallons of wine, being about one quarter of a pipe.²⁰ Most of the firm's interest in wines was with Port wine from the Douro district of Portugal. This was brought in mostly by the pipe, with additional smaller amounts entered as hogsheads and quarter casks, and once by the dozen (presumably of bottles). Between 1706 and 1824 the lawful wine gallon conformed to 6 Anne c 27 art 22 or 231 cubic inches of wine per gallon and 252 such gallons per tun (being two pipes).²¹ Thus, a pipe was half a tun, or 126 wine gallons. The hogshead was 63 wine gallons (one quarter of a pipe) while a bottle held between one sixth to one fifth of a gallon.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 137.

²⁰ A.E. Berriman, Historical Metrology, Greenwood Press, New York, 1969.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Dictionary of English Weights and Measures, p. 22.

The cask in some areas equalled about 110 gallons of cider²³ so the quarter cask would presumably hold roughly 25 gallons of wine.

Provisions

Almost without exception, the firm registers incoming amounts of bread in terms of "bags". The bag was a measure of capacity which varied in size according to its contents, there being also considerable local variations.²⁴ This is, of course, not bread as we know it, but a very hard, durable item. Somewhat similar was the biscuit, which was shipped either by the ton, or by the C, i.e. the hundred weight. The Cwt. or hundredweight usually weighed 112 pounds, being 1/20 of a ton of 2240 pounds.²⁵ Sugar seems always to have come in by the hogshead, often listed as so-many hogsheads of loaf sugar. Loaf sugar is sugar refined and molded into a loaf or a conical-shaped mass.²⁶ The hogshead was normally a measure for liquids and I could find no reference to how much loaf sugar actually constituted a hogshead. Butter came in to the firm most often by the firkin, but sometimes also by casks, and once each by the barrel and by the ton. The word firkin basically means a fourth part, and was a small cask originally.

²³ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 80.

²⁶ A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, Vol. VI, Part I, p. 370.

containing a quarter of a barrel. It varied in capacity according to the commodity, being 8 gallons of ale, 9 gallons of beer, but 8 gallons of butter or soap. In this measure the weight was important. A firkin of butter would weigh about 64 pounds, being 56 pounds of butter, the cask weighing 8 pounds.²⁷

Provisions lumped together might be measured in terms of tons, but individual commodities usually came as barrels or hogsheads, this including pease, flour, oatmeal, etc. Tobacco almost invariably came by the hogshead. Tea came by the Chest, a measure of capacity which before 1800 did not have a standardized size for most items, including tea.²⁸ The very important beef and pork arrived at the firm's premises almost always by the barrel, there being more pork mentioned than beef. Most of this appears to be, during the early years, of Irish origin. The one entry for English pork during 1785 came by the tierce. The barrel was a nearly cylindrical wooden vessel generally wider in the middle than at the ends, its length exceeding its breadth. It was often formed of curved staves bound together by hoops.²⁹ It was used for a wide variety of both liquid and dry items, but I can find no reference to how much beef or pork constitute a barrel. A

²⁷Dictionary of English Weights and Measures, pp. 61-62.

²⁸Ibid., p. 38.

²⁹Ibid., p. 13.

tierce was usually a measure for liquids and contained in the vicinity of 42 gallons,³⁰ but an unknown quantity of meat.

Miscellaneous Items

Much of the other items required by the firm came to them packaged in casks - snuff, shot, nails, pitch, tar, ironmongery, etc. Gowns and coats arrived by the box, soap by the case, and spunyarn by the coil. The coil is known as "a certain quantity" of (rope) put together in ring fashion,³¹ the quantity being nowhere mentioned. Hoops came by the bundle, there being (in Berkshire) 120 to 480 hoops to the bundle.³² Gunpowder came either by the keg or by the barrel, exact quantities being unknown. Glass came by the basket, again the exact amounts being unknown. The basket was usually a wickerwork container whose contents would vary widely.³³ Boards and axes came by the dozen, usually computed as 12.³⁴ One shipment of Irish yarnhose came in by the dozen weight. This may refer to the weight or wey, one of which referred to 30 pounds of hemp or like material.³⁵ In another

³⁰ Universal Dictionary of the English Language, (V. I, 1900, New York, ed. Hunter, R. and Norris, C., p. 1103.

³¹ Dictionary of English Weights and Measures, p. 24.

³² Ibid., p. 17.

³³ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 179-181.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 122-127.

shipment came p^s broⁿ Linen. The p^s is presumably pieces, and the number of yards, etc., in a piece varied according to the kind of material. Lawn, which was a fine, plain-woven linen or cotton averaged 18 yards in length.³⁶

Cork was brought into Newfoundland by the firm ~~for floats~~ and was most frequently measured in terms of quintles but occasionally in terms of hogsheads and quarter casks. Fish also was measured by the quintal or less frequently by the cask. The quintal appears related to the Cwt. for which fish was weighed at 124 pounds.³⁷ One hundred and twelve fish or 124 pounds might constitute the quintal. The firm also handled oil, cod and seal oil leaving Newfoundland and olive oil coming in. It seems to be calculated by the tun, and the hhd. The tun was a measure of capacity for wine, oil and honey and was generally 252 gallons.³⁸ Here the hogshead was 72 gallons.³⁹

Eighteenth century merchants bought and sold commodities in units of measurement ~~that~~ were somewhat less than standard, local variations being very strong. The international nature of their trade complicated things even more, for units prevalent in the source country

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 122-127.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 80-83.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 175.

³⁹ Robert Newman and Co. letter to John Leigh, Lisbon, Jan. 3, 1806, Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

would quantify items, to be sold within the English system. The merchants were very much aware of this special aspect of their affairs, however, and demanded of their dealers that the contents of a unit be identified in terms of a more recognizable sub-unit. Thus, in a letter from Newman's at Dartmouth to the firm of Crossland and Hamilton of Liverpool in 1795, they write "You don't say the number of gallons to your ton and there are various ways of computing it."⁴⁰ The commodity mentioned in this specific reference was olive oil, a ton of which could range from 240 to 260 gallons. In doing business with cod oil from Newfoundland the firm points out that the port of Dartmouth and the port of Poole use differing numbers of gallons per ton. Poole seems to conform to the 252 gallons per ton generally laid down, while the Dartmouth merchants seem to quote prices in terms of 256 gallons per ton.⁴¹ Thus they advise the firm of James Hunter of Bristol in 1795 that "when we sell here the gauge is 256 gallons to the ton, being the custom of the port, not the Poole gauge."⁴² For the merchants of Dartmouth the hogshead of oil seems to be explicitly 72 gallons, 63 wine gallons being the standard.⁴³

⁴⁰ Robert Newman and Co. letter to Crossland and Hamilton, Sept. 5, 1795. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴¹ Robert Newman and Co. letter to James Hunter, Bristol, Sept. 19, 1795. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴² Robert Newman and Co. letter to Thomas Curry, Gosport, Mar. 31, 1795. Newman Book No. 22/38, Reel E9.

⁴³ Robert Newman and Co. letter to John Leigh, Lisbon, Jan. 3, 1806. Newman Book No. 23/39, Reel E10.

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Copies of the above items are available in the Maritime History Archives, Memorial University, St. John's.

Maritime History Archives, Memorial University

Colonial Office Series 194. This series was used as the basic setting for this study, for roughly the period 1775-1800.

Colonial Office Series 325. Of this series Volume 7 was especially valuable, containing the reports of the Select Committee appointed to enquire into the trade to Newfoundland, 1793.

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