BRIGUS AND THE LABRADOR FISHERY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY

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by

© Robert Munro Lewis B. A. (Honours)

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ABSTRACT

The Labrador fishery carried out from Brigus, which was, to a great extent, representative of the Conception Bay Labrador fishery as a whole, was both an extension and successor of the resident Newfoundland fishery. The resident fishery, in turn, was at first an extension and then a successor of the British migratory fishery at Newfoundland. The socio-economic relations of the Brigus Labrador fishery were, as its predecessors had been, essentially capitalist in nature and remained so through to, at least, the beginning of the Second World War.

The British fishery at Newfoundland was initially a migratory fishery organized along capitalist lines. Under the conditions of the migratory fishery the economic relations which existed between capitalists and between capitalists and workers were governed by British maritime law, in particular the different applications of the concept of *maritime lien*. After 1610 the fishery at Newfoundland took on an increasingly settled character. In the seventeenth century the production of dried cod was increasingly carried out by *inhabitants* or *planters* and *bye boat keepers*, while the trade in fish at Newfoundland (i.e. export), was conducted by *Sack ships*, *fishing ships*, traders from the American colonies of Britain, along with a growing population of resident merchants; the suppliers of the trade were merchants in England, fishing ships operating as migratory merchants, and resident merchants. By the first quarter of the eighteenth century the traditional ship fishery had virtually died out.

Conception Bay and Brigus were the site of the earliest English settlement at Newfoundland and their pattern of settlement and growth are nearly synonymous with the English settlement at Newfoundland. The period from 1750 to 1870 was one marked by growth and prosperity for Newfoundland and Conception Bay. In this period the resident fishery came to dominate the fishery while the cod and seal fisheries were the central and predominant activities for virtually all of the island. For much of the period, in particular from 1750 to 1830, Conception Bay was the centre of the island's economic growth and in the early part of the nineteenth century it even surpassed St. John's in economic importance and population. The steady rise in population around Conception Bay, which continued past the mid-point of the nineteenth century, began in the years from 1750 to 1755. The initial resource base upon which this growth was based was the cod fishery on the *French Shore* latter to be supplanted by the migratory Labrador fishery. At the end of the eighteenth century a spring seal fishery developed around Conception Bay. The seal fishery complemented the Labrador fishery and by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century had risen to at least equal importance to the cod fishery.

The growth in population involved a continuing shift from a migratory to year-round use of the island's resources by merchants and labourers and a general rise in the number, power, and importance of the planters. One cause of the growth in the resident fishery was an increase in the availability and a decrease in the price of supplies supplied from south-west of Ireland and, especially, from New England. These new sources of provisions, combined with famine and

economic recession in Ireland, the prime source of labourers since the seventeenth century, made it easier for the planters to obtain labour and made Newfoundland a more attractive place for permanent settlement. The increasing number of resident labourers also allowed the planters to extend their fishery beyond that of the migratory fishers and to expand their activities into the spring seal fishery. The shift to residency was made easier because the difference between resident and migratory fisheries had always been one of different economic strategies within essentially capitalist relations of production and not an essential change in those relations. The legal framework regulating the relations of production in the fishery continued to be derived from maritime custom and law, virtually unchanged from those which had prevailed in the previous century.

The three classes which dominated the resident Newfoundland fishery economy, at least during this period, were merchants, labourers, and planters. Most of those fishing were labourers, workers owning little more in the production process than their personal effects. The merchants were merchant capitalists involved primarily in trade in supplies and fish rather than being capitalists directly involved in producing dried cod. Planters, it is the argument of this thesis, are best classified as small capitalist.

This fishery, commonly referred to as the *planter fishery*, was essentially capitalist has been accepted as being the dominant set of relations of production up through the first third of the nineteenth century. A number of authorities have argued, however, that the *planter fishery* disappeared from Newfoundland around the year 1840. It is the argument of this thesis that such was not the case and

that the planters' fishery remained the dominant fishery, at least around Conception Bay, throughout the period until, at least, the Second World War.

Brigus was involved in the Labrador and spring seal fishery from those fisheries beginnings and those fisheries were the economic bases for the growth in Brigus in the nineteenth century. The social and economic character of Brigus was that of a relatively prosperous community, dominated by a class of independent planters and with considerable competition among merchants. These characteristics were shared with a number of other communities of similar size around Conception Bay. The period from about 1820 to about 1860 was the height of Brigus's prosperity, with the community being probably the most important sealing port in Conception Bay if not in all of Newfoundland. The period from 1880 to 1945 was marked by a decline in the population, economic activity, and prosperity of Brigus. The direct cause of this fall in population was the rapid collapse of the seal fishery in Brigus.

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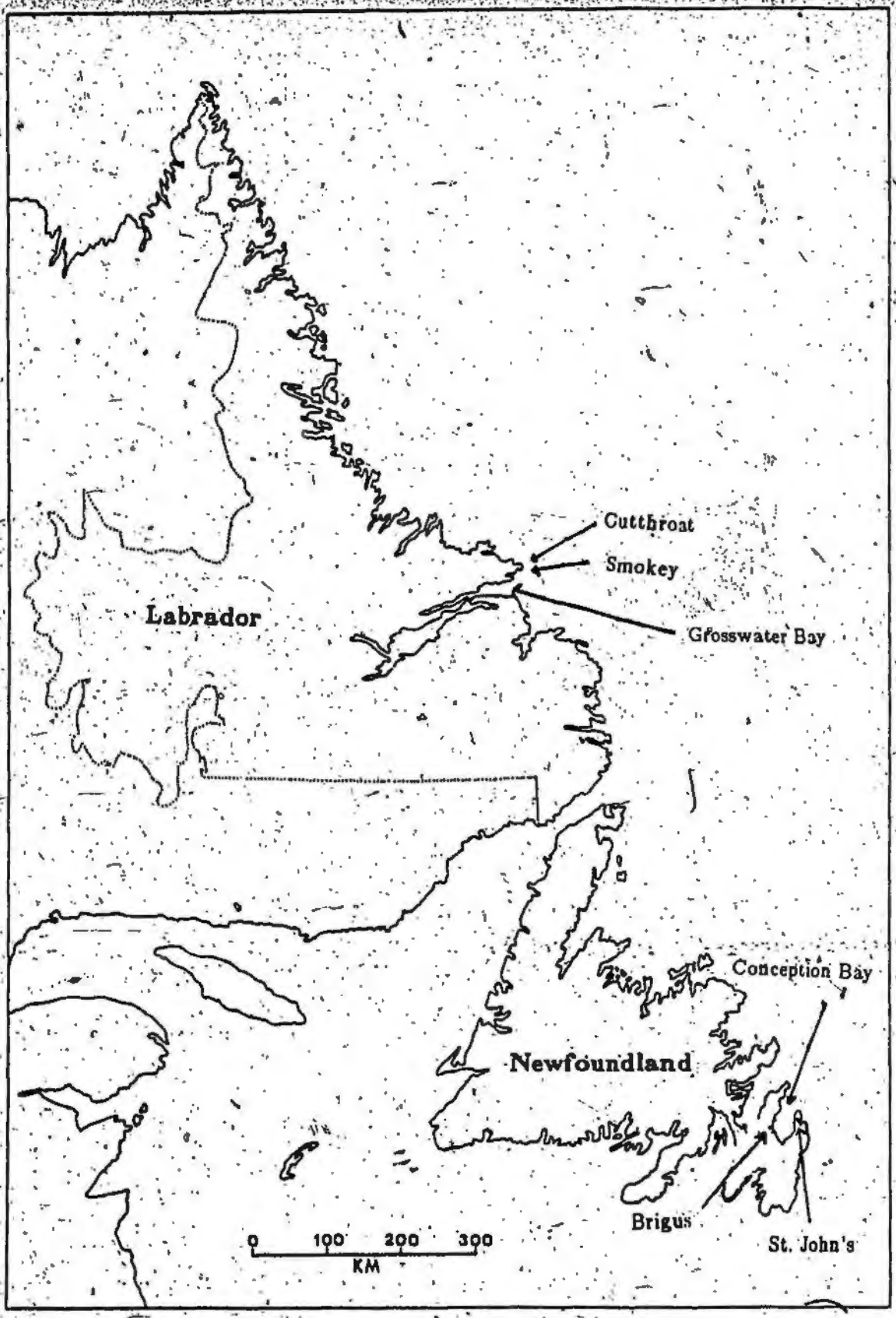

Map 1.
Newfoundland and Labrador

Courtesy of the Department of Geography,
Memorial University of Newfoundland.

-Chapter One-

INTRODUCTION

The present work is an ethnohistorical study of the fishery carried out from Brigus, Conception Bay, Newfoundland from the beginning of European settlement to the beginning of the Second World War. For much of its history the fishery for Brigus has meant the summer cod fishery carried out on the coast of Labrador and a spring seal fishery which complemented the summer fishery.

I. Objectives.

This study has the following broad general objectives:

1) Describe, with special emphasis on the relations of production, the key socio-economic characteristics of the fishery, and especially the Labrador fishery as carried out from Brigus.

2) Relate these characteristics to certain productive relations and the class relations in Brigus.

3) Attempt to explain how and why these characteristics developed in Brigus.

4) Compare these characteristics of the dominant fishery in Brigus with characterizations in the literature of the fisheries of other communities and with the characterization given of the economy and society of Newfoundland in general by Sider (1986).

II. Theoretical considerations.

This study is exploratory and primarily descriptive. Such theoretical considerations as are dealt with concern the specifics of the social and economic development of Newfoundland and of Conception Bay, with a practical emphasis on economic development. The general assumptions underlying this study are:

1) That the relations of production and exchange (or exploitation) are fundamental (though not necessarily exclusively so) to understanding a society.

2) That classes are both the agents and expression of these relations.

3) That the social and, especially, economic character of Brigus and the Labrador fishery in the inter-wars period (1919-1938) can be described and to some degree explained historically (rather than only functionally).

4) That the social and economic character of Brigus and the Labrador fishery in the inter-wars period can, in turn, help us understand certain questions about the history of Newfoundland.

III. Review of the literature.

A commonly accepted view of the history of the Newfoundland fishery is that it went through two changes in the relations of production or work processes dominant in the fishery. The first change occurred when a migratory fishery (the *Fishing-ship fishery*) based on essentially capitalist relations of production,

involving merchants, nominally independent boat owners, and fishermen workers, became a resident endeavour (the *planter fishery*). This first change took place gradually, over the whole of Newfoundland, in the eighteenth century. The second change took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in different areas of the island, when the planter fishery was replaced as the dominant relation of production by the *family* or *household fishery*. The dominant economic relations within the latter were *familial* rather than wage based (viz., E. Antler 1981[1], S. Antler 1975, Faris 1967, Iverson and Matthews 1968, and especially Sider 1986). While there is disagreement as to how the family fishery should be classified, in particular whether or not it is essentially capitalist (viz., E. Antler 1981, 3-4 and 53-93)[2], there is agreement that by, at latest, the mid-nineteenth century the *planter fishery*, was replaced in all of Newfoundland by the *family fishery* and that it is this fishery which characterized the Newfoundland economy and society until the quite recent past.

This conception of the family fishery and its dominant position within traditional Newfoundland society is based on some of the ethnographies of Newfoundland fishing communities done since the Second World War and Newfoundland's incorporation into Canada (viz. Britan, 1974; Faris, 1972; Firestone, 1967; Nemec,

[1] For E. Antler neither of these changes are changes in relations of production but rather are simply changes in the work process within the relations of production which, from the initiation of the fishery at Newfoundland to the present, remain strictly capitalist in nature (E. Antler 1981, 3-4). The change is none-the-less essential in her formulation of the evolution of Newfoundland economy and society.

[2] This is a question which will not be dealt with; it revolves around the characterization of merchant capitalism and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

1980). Even by Newfoundland standards, these studies were all done in quite isolated communities, seemingly in light of the common anthropological assumption that the least complex, technologically simplest, and most isolated communities most closely represent traditional social organizations and economies. While none of these standard ethnographies claim to be more than an ethnography of the particular communities studied, others, for example E. Antler (1981) and Sider (1986), have taken them to represent a pattern applying to all of Newfoundland and a key to understanding the evolution of Newfoundland economy and society.

The characteristics of the putative *traditional* fishery are outlined by Sider (1986, 21-23) as follows:

> [T]he fishery in Newfoundland was... a family fishery, from the early nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century, in that the family provided the fundamental organization of the work process.... The village was the social unit from which the boat crews and shore crowds were drawn, and redrawn—reorganized—each season; the unit both of support and of competition between and among fisher families. The merchant—usually one to a village—organized and dominated the connections between the village fishery and the field of larger forces that took a part in, and of, the fishery.... The truck system, the dominant form of payment in the family fishery,.... prevented local alternatives to merchant domination from emerging.../ [and] severely reducing the amount of cash in circulation in the outports.... was a major factor creating the "traditionalism" of Newfoundland outports.

The central points of this characterization are:

1) That the basic production unit was the family, either nuclear or extended.

2) That villages, the largest social unit, were essentially isolated from each other and the rest of the outside world except through the media-

tion of the merchant.

3) That there was a general organizational simplicity at the local community level; in particular, that there was a lack of marked class or status structure beyond that of merchant and fisherman, as well as within labour; in particular that there was a lack of any significant occupational specialization, with labour marked by occupational pluralism, with a corresponding egalitarian ethic.

4) That there was a lack of economic opportunities outside the fishery, with an attendant lack of economic choice and an economic conservatism.

5) That the relations of production were dominated by the truck (or credit) system, which involved merchant monopoly over economic transactions, the almost complete absence of wage work, and a paucity of cash and cash transactions.

The literature bearing on the Labrador fishery in the inter-wars period, in particular Black (1960) and Tanner (1944), gives only a superficial portrait of the fishery. The basic elements in this representation are dominated by a division of primary producers based on purely technical factors, in particular the division between *floaters* and *stationers*, that is users and non-users, respectively, of schooners as mobile bases for fishing at the Labrador. This representation is presented without reference to the characteristics of the home communities of

those involved in the Labrador fishery, to the internal organization of fishing crews, or the general economic organization (that is of supply, property relations, exchange, or ancillary industries) of the fishery. Probably as a result of this superficial description of the operations of the Labrador fishery, the Labrador fishery has been characterized as simply the spatial extension of a single and fairly uniform 'traditional' Newfoundland inshore fishery, (viz. Black 1960, Britan 1974, 41-45 and 1982, 36-39). A more detailed examination and critique of the literature is to be found in Chapters 3 and 4.

IV. Rational.

Brigus and the Labrador fishery were selected for study because, as will be argued below, Brigus was not one of those isolated communities and the dominant relations of production in the Labrador fishery were not those of the family fishery.

Brigus is a community on the western side of Conception Bay in the electoral district of Port-de-Grave. The 1981 population of Brigus was 898 people. In the 1971 census, the most recent in which detailed data on individual communities is readily available, the total population is 746. While fishing was the traditional basis of the economy, in the 1971 census there were at most ten people involved in full-time fishing (listed under "Other primary occupations", see Newfoundland Planning and Priorities Committee 1977). The inshore fishing resources in the area of Conception Bay close to Brigus have always been fairly limited.

The main part of Brigus harbour is very open and has a wide mouth. There is a small inner harbour, the *Harbour Pond*, which is entered by a very narrow passage, which limits its use to vessels of small size. The main harbour is open to northerly and easterly winds and can be very rough in storms from those directions. Formerly, schooners using the harbour would run to more secure harbours (especially Bay Roberts and Conception Harbour) when such storms threatened. Deep water runs right to the cliffs which surround much of the harbour, and prime water frontage has always been at a premium in Brigus. One of the landmarks of Brigus, a tunnel drilled through the rock to the water front, was built during the nineteenth century to increase the area of usable frontage. While these characteristics of the harbour of Brigus mean that for many purposes the harbour is very imperfect, it means that little ice is held to the shore in spring and that ice which does form in the harbour is quickly broken up by ocean swells and cleared out by westerly winds. This characteristic of the harbour was important for the spring seal fishery which was to develop at the end of the eighteenth century.

While the soil in the immediate area of Brigus is fairly rocky and far from prime agricultural land, to the interior there is better quality farming land, in particular in the area now known as *Makinsons* (after a farmer who worked the land there) and formerly as the *Goulds*. Areas of the district of Harbour Main, directly to the south of Brigus, in particular around Colliers, were also areas of some agricultural development.

Brigus and other communities in that area (ie. Carbonear, Harbour Grace, Bay Roberts, et al.) were not isolated, either from each other, from St. John's, nor from Europe and mainland North America. Fishing crews for the Labrador fishery were often made up of members from many different communities in Conception Bay; as well, merchants in Brigus, and in other communities, supplied people fishing on the Labrador who came from many communities along the northern coast of Newfoundland and from communities on the Labrador. Conversely, crews from Brigus received their supplies for the Labrador fishery from merchant firms located in many areas of the island (though especially Conception Bay and St. John's). Connections with the rest of Newfoundland and Labrador were also established by labour migration (beside that connected with the Labrador fishery) on both a seasonal and more permanent basis. Finally, connections with areas outside of Newfoundland and Labrador were formed through the international trading and shipping carried out from Brigus in the nineteenth century and, more importantly, through emigration, both permanent and temporary, to the United States and, later, Canada which started in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued through to the present.

The dominant relations of production in the Labrador fishery as carried out from Brigus and other Conception Bay communities were those of the *planter fishery*. My data indicate that, contrary to the authorities cited above, the *planter fishery* did not die out in the nineteenth century, at least in the area studied here. On the contrary, it was the dominant form of productive relations in the Labrador fishery until the Second World War. The planter fishery of Brigus

was essentially and quite overtly capitalist in nature. It was so because the basic productive unit was the fishing crew, which was composed of a planter who, as a capitalist, albeit often on a small scale, owned, both nominally and effectively, the means of production (ie. the boat, fishing gear, room, etc.) necessary to conduct the fishery. The planter bought the means of production and wage goods from other capitalists, in particular from merchants (many of whom were in turn involved, often to a large extent, directly in fishing). The planter bought labour power from labourers, generally referred to as *fishing servants*, who were were paid either in set wages or in a share of the catch. The fishing servant labourers were dependent on the planter for the wages necessary to purchase their subsistence.

The following examination of the Brigus Labrador fishery leads to several reinterpretations of the historical record, in particular concerning the significance of wages and shares in the fishery (viz. Chapter 3 below).

Chapter 2 deals with the period from the establishment of the community of Brigus in the seventeenth century until the beginning of the decline in the migratory fishery and the growth in the settled population which took place after the mid-point of the eighteenth century. Chapter 3 deals with the period from about 1750 to about 1870, the period of rapid growth in the community. Chapter 4 deals with the period from 1870 to the Second World War, the period of Brigus's decline.

V. Sources.

Data for this study derive from i) interviews with people who had lived in Brigus and with people both from Brigus and surrounding communities who had fished at the Labrador before the Second World War, and, ii) primary and secondary historical records available in archives and libraries in St. John's. The interviews were taped and transcribed and are presently available from the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore Archives. Besides the interviews done by the author, tape recorded interviews available from the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore Archives were also used. With both sources of interview material the primary emphasis, both in the line of questioning (where applicable) and in the interpretation of the material, was on the direct experience of the interviewees. The interviews used cover only the period after the turn of the century and most of the material concerns the period between the two World Wars.

Outside of court records, there is little documentary evidence from the nineteenth century which deals with the economic relations of the planters, especially the relationships which existed between planters and their servants. Therefore much of the detail of these relationships must be inferred from interview material which actually concerns these relationships as they existed in the first part of the twentieth century. However—as there is no evidence that the economic system changed radically between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the oral tradition (from interviews) relates that there was no such change, and as there were no major changes in the legal relations governing the fishery—making such inferences would seem both justified and essential if an

understanding of those relations is to be attempted.

With the primary historical records, which cover the earlier periods of the study, the emphasis is on economic, demographic, and legal sources. This is both because of the emphasis in this study and due to the bias of the primary sources. For the period before 1750 (Chapter 2) the primary historical data which relates directly to Brigus is both very scattered and limited. Because of this most of the information, other than some limited demographic data, concerns English Newfoundland as a whole (though it should be noted that at that time English Newfoundland was nearly synonymous with the area about St. John's and Conception Bay). Despite this, the use of primary and secondary historical sources in combination with the few references which exist dealing directly with Brigus gives a picture of Brigus and the other Conception Bay in this period.

For the period from 1750 to c. 1870 (Chapter 3) there is more primary information, at least for the period after 1815. However, even in this period, at least until c. 1850, references to Brigus are both brief and relatively scattered, and so for this period references to Conception Bay as a whole and to the other major Conception Bay communities are used most extensively. In combination with the scattered references to Brigus, this again permits a fairly complete picture to be drawn of the economic life of the community.

The period covered in Chapter 4 (c. 1870 to the Second World War) is, contrary to earlier periods, quite rich in primary historical material relating to Brigus. For this period the economic life of Brigus and the workings of the Labrador and seal fisheries are given in some detail in the memoires of Robert

Bartlett (1928, 1934, and n.d.) and, especially, Nicholas Smith (1936). There are as well a vast increase in the numbers of government reports, legal reports (in particular the decisions of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland), newspapers, and other published materials for this period as well as the start of the Newfoundland census in 1836. In this study relevant government reports were examined as were the legal reports and census materials (including the nominal census material from 1921 and 1936); the newspapers from the period were examined selectively, though no comprehensive study of the newspapers of the time was attempted (other than that of the *Bay Roberts Guardian* and the *Fisherman's Advocate* for the period between the two World Wars).

Secondary historical sources were depended on to the greatest extent for the period before 1750 (Chapter 2), especially the works of Davis (1980) and Matthews (1968). For the period from 1750 to c. 1870 (Chapter 3) secondary historical sources were also used extensively, especially Head (1972, 1976). For the period from c. 1870 to the Second World War (Chapter 4) less dependence was placed on secondary historical works. However, Innis (1954) and Neis (1980) were important guides for understanding this period. Of course, as was outlined above, much of Chapters 3 and 4 is concerned with questioning the picture drawn in much of the existing secondary sources of the *traditional* fishery and economy.

-Chapter Two-

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO 1750

The history of Newfoundland to 1750 spans the time from rediscovery by Europeans, through the initial European settlement at Newfoundland, by John Guy in 1610 at Cupids, Conception Bay, to the eve of the "striking upward trend of total activity" (Head 1976:56), especially the growth of the resident population, which was to ensure the dominance of a resident population over a migratory fishery.

I. History and Definitions.

Before 1610 the Newfoundland fishery was an entirely migratory one, in which Newfoundland was simply a fishing station; the supply and export stages of production, and the recruitment of fishing crews were carried on from Europe.[1] While fishermen from Bristol may have fished at Newfoundland as early as the 1480s, British fishing efforts were quite limited until the last decades of the sixteenth century. The English fishery was carried out by the *Western Adventurers*, most of whom came from the West Country ports of England. The *fishing ships* they employed were generally quite small. Most were between 40 and 90 tons (Cell 1969:130), similar to the range of the Labrador schooners of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[1] The Continental fishers, Spain, Portugal, and France, heavy salting their fish, dried their fish in Europe as well.

The fishery at Newfoundland was one of the earliest areas of capitalist investment in England. The fishing ships were owned and the fishing expeditions were financed by men of limited capital who strove to limit and share the risks of a risky business. Among the strategies employed to reduce individual risk were the practice of having the *necessaries* of the voyage supplied by one or more third parties (on credit or as partners). Under British maritime law mortgages given for the necessities for the voyage were given either under bonds of *bottomry*, where the ship and its cargo served as security, or of *respandentia*, where only the cargo served as security. Unlike a normal credit relationship, however, both the principal and the interest on the loan were forfeit if the ship were lost on the voyage, as a result of the extra risk incured in this type of credit relationship, loans of bottomry and respandentia conferred a *maritime lien* on both the principle and the interest.[2]

The payment of the crews' wages in shares rather than set wages was also a feature of the Newfoundland migratory fishery.[3] This meant that the risks of a poor voyage would be shared by labour as well as capital. But even set wages were not paid if the voyage was a total failure, for example, if the ship were wrecked. The wages of fishermen and seaman were also given a maritime lien

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[2] The doctrine of *maritime lien*, fundamental to British maritime law, unknown in common law, and very different from an ordinary possessory lien, is the right to enforce a claim against the *res*, that is the thing itself, which is, among other things, a vessel and the cargo of a vessel (which in the case of a fishing vessel or boat includes the fishing gear and the fish caught, see Roscoe 1882:6-7).

[3] The share system had been a feature of much of British Mediaeval shipping but was dying out except in fishing and privateering (Cell 1969:16).

and had presidence over all other claims (Cell 1969:Chapter 1 and Roscoe 1882:6-7, 67-70, 85-94, 98-102). These strategies or derivatives of them and the maritime law which governed them were characteristic of the Newfoundland fishery through to the twentieth century.

After being supplied for their summer fishing voyage in Britain, the fishing ships would leave England between January and April, hoping to arrive at Newfoundland before May. While fishing on the banks off Newfoundland was done during some periods and to some extent by both migratory and resident British fishing interests, most of the fish produced at Newfoundland by all of the British fishing interests was taken by inshore fishers who lived and cured their fish at, at least, semi-permanent premises, *fishing room*,[4] situated on the shore. Upon arriving at Newfoundland the crew of a fishing ship would prepare or repair their room using local supplies of timber if available.

The following description of the annual tasks in the production of salt cod given by James Yonge (1963:56-58) for the year 1663 could apply, though with some modifications, to fishing operations right up until at least the Second World War, though new methods of catching fish were introduced in the nineteenth century.

> [I]n the snow and cold all the men go into the woods to cut timber, fir spruce, and birch being here plentiful. With this they build stages,

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[4] A *fishing room* or simply *room* is defined as "A tract of parcel of land on the waterfront of a cove or harbour from which a fishery is conducted; the stores, sheds, *flakes*, wharves and other facilities where the catch is landed and processed, and the crew housed." (Dictionary of Newfoundland English 1982).

flakes, cookroom, and houses. The houses are made of a frythe of boughs, sealed inside with rinds, which look like planed deal, and covered with the same, and turfs of earth upon, to keep the sun from raning them. The stages are begun on the edge of the shore, and built out into the sea, a floor of round timber, supported with posts, and shores of great timber. The boats lie at the head of them, as at a key, and throw up their fish, which is split, salted, &c.. They throw away the heads and sound bones....

The complement of men to a boat are 5, that is 3 for to catch the fish, two to save it. Those 3 are the boat's master, midshipman, and foreshipman. The boat is 3 or 4 tons and will carry 1000 or 1200 cod, but these three men will row these great boats a long way. The boat's master he rows at the stern, against the other two, who row one side; he belays against them, and so not only rows, but steers the boat. The boats' masters, generally, are able men, the midshipman next, and the foreshipman are generally striplings. They bring the fish at the stage head, the foreshipman goes to boil their kettle, the other two throw up the fish on the stage-head by pears, that is, a staff with a prong of iron in him, which they stick in the fish and throw them up. Then a boy takes them and lays them on a table in the stage, on one side of which stands a header, who opens the belly, takes out the liver, and twines off the head and guts (which fall through the stage into the sea) with notable dexterity and suddenness. The liver runs through a hole in the table, into a coole or great tub, which is thrown into the train fatt.... When the header has done his work, he thrusts the fish to the other side of the table, where sits a spliter, or splitter, who with a strong knife splits it abroad, and with a back stroke cuts off the bone, which falls through a hole into the sea.... When the fish is split, he falls into a drooge barrow, which, when full, is drawn to one side of the stage, where boys lay it one on top of another. The salter comes with salt on a wooden shovel and with a little brush strews the salt on it. When a pile is about 3 foot high they begin with another. A salter is a skilful officer, for too much salt burns the fish and makes it break, and wet, too little makes it redshanks, that is, look red when dried, and so is not merchantable.

The fish being salted, lies 3 or 4 days, sometimes (if bad weather) 8 or 10 days, and is then washed by the boys in salt or fresh water and laid in a pile skin upward on a platt of beach stones, which they call a horse. After a day or thereabout, it's laid abroad on flakes, that is boughs thinly laid upon a frame, like that of a table, and here the fish dries. By night, or in wet weather, it's made up in faggots (as they call it), that is, 4 or five fishes with the skin upward, and a broad fish on top. When well dried, it's made up into prest pile, where it sweats; that

> is, the salt sweats out, and corning, makes the fish look white. After it's so done, it's dried one day on the ground and then put up in dry pile, as they call it, that is a pile bigger than the prest pile by 3 times. There it lies till shipt off, when it's dried part of a day, then weighed, carried on board, laid, and prest snug with great stones.

The fishing ships either brought their salt cod back to the West Country ports, where it was either consumed in Britain or reexported to the Continent, or they entered into the Triangular Trade, taking their fish to Southern Europe and trading it there for speci or products such as wine or fruit and then, possibly, trading to other European ports on the return trip to Britain.

Coincident with the founding of the Cupids colony and the beginnings of settlement in the second decade of the seventeenth century, the nature of the fish trade began to change quite rapidly. This change was marked by an increasing economic specialization in the fishing trade and a shift of more and more aspects of the trade to Newfoundland. Whereas in the sixteenth century ships from England had carried on all aspects of the fishing trade, (transport to Newfoundland, catching and curing, and the marketing of cod in Europe), the seventeenth century saw the growth of interests concerned with only part of the cycle of cod production. The catching and curing of dried cod was now carried out by the *inhabitants* or *planters, bye boat keepers* (migratory fishers who depended on the fishing ships to get to and from Newfoundland each season), as well as the continued involvement of the *fishing ships*. The trade in fish at Newfoundland, that is the purchase of the dried cod, was conducted by *Sack ships* (ships from Great Britain which were only involved in the trade for dried cod and not in its direct production), *fishing ships*, traders from the American colonies of Britain, and resident

merchants. The suppliers of the trade were merchants in England who supplied the fishing ships and the bye boat keepers. The fishing ships in turn supplied the inhabitants as did merchants residing in Newfoundland.

A. The Production Units.

The *fishing ships*, owned or leased by the *Western Adventurers*, were, at least nominally, primarily fishers rather than traders while at Newfoundland (though they had always traded extensively in the European ports where they sold their salt cod). The fishing technology employed by the fishing ships was identical to that used in the previous century and to that employed by the other primary producers (ie. bye boat keepers and inhabitants): a small boat (three to five tons), inshore fishery with the *fishing ships* being a means of transport to and from Newfoundland and, perhaps, a warehouse while there. The fishing ships usually delivered their fish, and fish they had procured from the resident fishers, to European markets for salt cod although they could also sell a percentage of what they had to Sack ships or transport the dried cod back to Britain for sale there.

By the first quarter of the eighteenth century the traditional ship fishery (ie. where the ships were involved primarily in fishing rather than trade at Newfoundland) had virtually died out. The West Country Adventurers' vessels, while still referred to by the British Admiralty as "Fishing Ships," had more and more come to be used for supplying the resident fishery, transporting passagers to and from Newfoundland, and for exporting dried cod to Europe (Matthews

1968:258, 265-76; Innis 1954:151). The shift in the migratory ship fishery from the payment of their crews in shares to one in wages is symptomatic of this change.[5] Sack ships, whose prime role had always been traders, had always operated on the wage rather than share system (Cell 1969:17, 132).

There were two groups who specialised in fishing at Newfoundland and were never involved, to any significant degree, in the final marketing of dried cod. These were the *bye boat keepers'* and the *inhabitants'* or *planters'*. The *bye boat keepers*, like the Adventurers, were supplied, at least in the seventeenth century, in England. But they took passage on a ship to Newfoundland, usually one of the fishing ships of the Western Adventurers.

The bye boat keepers, again like the Adventurers, could leave some or all of their equipment for fishing in Newfoundland or bring it across from England (see Davies 1980:257). At Newfoundland they operated much as did the planters; their servants could be from the resident population or, as was more commonly the case, from Britain, while they delivered their fish at Newfoundland to either Sack ships or fishing ships. The bye boat keepers are often characterized (Matthews 1968:162-71) as more independent of the merchant and, hence, generally better off than the planters. The bye boat keepers had, during this period, a number of advantages in comparison to the planters; first, they had direct access to the source of provisions and supply in England, second, they had direct

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[5] This is discussed in more detail below.

access to the labourers they needed to conduct the fishery and, hence, in all probability, they had more flexiblity in hiring (ie. they could employ shares or wages as labour and the economic conditions dictated), third, they had greater security in times of economic distress in the fishery, with alternate employment offered in England, or even relief under the Poor Laws. However, in periods when the inhabitant fishery was the more prosperous, the bye boat keepers tended to become planters. This was especially so during periods of warfare.

The initial growth of the bye boat fishery took place during the period of the English Civil War and the wars with the Dutch, c. 1640 to 1670 (see Innis 1954:97-9) and they remained an important part of the Newfoundland fishery until the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The bye boat fishery was concentrated in the area of St. John's and along the Southern Shore, and was less common in the more settled areas such as Conception Bay.[6]

The *planters* were like bye boat keepers, but they generally resided in Newfoundland on a more permanent basis (if they left Newfoundland it was probably as often as emigrants to North America as to return to England), and they received their supplies at Newfoundland rather than in Britain (where, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the vast majority of their supplies came from). The term *planters* is not synonymous with inhabitant. Rather, it refers to only one class in the inhabitant population, although in reports from the period

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[6] As has been pointed out by Matthews (1973, No. 9:3-4), and as will be seen below, the bye boat fishery had many parallels with the migratory Labrador fishery stationer fishery which arose in the nineteenth century.

they are often confounded. A planter was an inhabitant (in some cases in the seventeenth century, a woman) who controlled enough fishing property (a plantation; in particular, a *room*,) to employ a crew and was, thereby, a *master*. This sense of the word remained the same through to the twentieth century, although when all fishing was done by inhabitants, that aspect of the term became redundant.

Initially the defining characteristic of the planters was at least as much where they were supplied, and what this entailed, as where they lived. Both planters and bye boat keepers spent certain winters in Newfoundland and certain winters in Britain, though the planters probably spent more winters in Newfoundland than did the bye boat keepers. Both employed servants from Britain or from Newfoundland, and both could *own* their fishing premises at Newfoundland.[7] Emphasizing the place of supply helps to explain why, in the enumerations of the population from the end of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Naval Commanders and Governors kept separate lists of the "summer population of inhabitants" and of the "winter population of inhabitants" (Davies 1980:264, suggests the same, and also states, p. 258, that bye boat keepers were supplied in England).

The typical fishing operation of a planter was, on the whole, fairly small pre-

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[7] The question of private property in Newfoundland is a long and complex one (see E. Antler 1981; Davies 1980; Matthews 1968; and Sider 1986). While the British Government may not have recognized title to land in Newfoundland until the nineteenth century, it was recognized locally by both fishermen and merchants from a much earlier date.

vious to 1750. It was usually an operation no larger than could be directly supervised by the planter, generally being the fishing effort which could be handled by a single fish curing operation. This is illustrated in the detailed censi from the seventeenth century, in which there is an almost exact one-to-one correspondence between the number of planters and the number of stages (the place where the salting down of fish took place; see Figures 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 below). In the case of hand-lining, the dominant pre-nineteenth century fishing technology, this would be one or two boats employing five or six servants (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

In the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries the planters were often in a very precarious position and their condition was frequently compared, unfavourably, with that of the bye boat keepers (Matthews 1968:177-78). As a result of, 1) the expense and insecurity of supplies and labourers coming annually from Britain, 2) a lack of significant economic activity outside of the cod fishery, 3) the limited nature of agricultural activity, and 4) the lack of mercantile competition —especially during times of economic depression in the fish trade when the numbers of *fishing ships*, which supplied most of the planters, would drop off dramatically, the planters could easily become the *slaves of the merchants*, and they were often so described. However, in periods of economic prosperity some planters did very well and rose to become the economic equals of some migratory merchants (Matthews 1968:276).[8] During periods of warfare and

[8] The historical records probably overemphasise those periods in which the resident population was economically badly off as, from the eighteenth century, those were the periods when the trade in general was poorly off.

in areas where there was an inadequate number of good fishing rooms for the population (ie. in areas with a relatively large settled population) the planter fishery seems to have been the only viable one.

The balance between the numbers of bye boat keepers and planters, which by the eighteenth century was essentially the balance between the migratory and resident fisheries, started to change in the second third of the eighteenth century. It must be emphasized that the difference between the planters and the bye boat keepers (and the fishing ship operators as well) was never very precise or clear. Both groups used the same technologies and the only real difference between them was where they resided outside of the fishing season and where they were supplied, two things which could be relatively easily changed in response to changing economic conditions. From the 1670s to the 1720s the relative and absolute numbers of bye boat keepers and planters had not shown any consistent changes, but after about 1730 the number of residents began to increase significantly (see Chapter 3).

B. The Suppliers and Exporters.

As the seventeenth century progressed the fishing ships became increasingly involved in taking passengers, planters and bye boat keepers, to Newfoundland and for many this became a major source of revenue (Davies 1980:11-12, 258-61). More importantly, they served as suppliers to and, hence, purchasers of the dried cod of the inhabitants' fishery. In fact, evidence from Davies (1980:271) suggests that the fishing ships were also involved in supplying merchants at Newfound-

land:

> The *Henden* [a "fishing ship"] left England on April 5, 1705, carrying on board the combined cargoes of at least six merchants.... Some vessels remained tied up in port for a considerable time, slowly gathering cargoes which represented the investment of a great many merchants.

They were also increasingly carrying on a year-round merchant operation.

Matthews (1968:175) gives evidence for the existence of resident merchants as early as 1674. Peter Butler and Thomas Edwards, of Carbonear and Port-de-Grave respectively, operated as both planters and merchants, owning a large ship which brought supplies from England and took fish to market. Beaudoin (1900;58) makes further reference to the existence of large resident merchants for the end of the seventeenth century. As Matthews (1968:273, 276-78) has made clear, the resident merchants and the migratory merchants (ie. *fishing ships*) were closely allied and the two are probably best understood as simply different economic strategies employed by West Country mercantile interests.

The fishing ships had always exported their fish to and traded extensively in the European ports which took their salt cod. As the seventeenth century progressed they increasingly exported fish which they had procured from the planters and bye-boat keepers. Conversely they might sell or resell some or all their fish to *Sack ships*. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the majority of fishing ships had become migratory merchants involved in all aspects of the fish trade; fishing, exporting, and supplying (Matthews 1968:258, 374). While they continued to engage in some fishing they obtained most of the fish which they exported from the planters and bye boat keepers (Matthews 1968:266-68; Davies 1980:270-

71).

Sack ships were trading vessels which were seeking to purchase cargoes of dried cod at Newfoundland for resale in Europe. They obtained their fish at Newfoundland from the Adventurers, bye boat keepers, or inhabitants, usually, in exchange for consumer goods for the fishing population, of which alcohol was the quiescential example and from which the Sack ships received their name. Sack ships generally arrived in Newfoundland when the dried cod was ready to be shipped and attempted to leave for the markets in Europe as early as possible (Davies 1980:266; Innis 1954:54). Sack ship merchants were usually neither interested nor in a position to serve as general suppliers for the fishery, that is to advance the supplies necessary for the operation of the fishery as well as to purchase dried cod. As such, Sack ship merchants were commonly referred to as "partial Adventurers". That is, they were interested in only one aspect of the trade in dried cod trade (export), and that trade was usually only one aspect of their more general trading activities.

It was towards the end of the seventeenth century that traders from the American colonies, usually from New England and Massachusetts in particular (Davies 1980:367), began to trade at Newfoundland. Most of the New Englanders were not involved in fishing to any extent but were at Newfoundland to trade provisions for dried cod (which was traded to the West Indies), British Bills of exchange (used in payment of British manufactured goods), and in search of labourers for the New England colonies. Many of these traders were essentially a type of Sack ship, but one which, unlike the London and Bristol based ones, had

almost no political supporters in England and one which all of the English fishing interests could rally against. Although a few New Englanders did become regular suppliers in the fish trade (Matthews 1968:248), most seem to have remained partial Adventurers, selling supplies to both fishers and resident merchants.

The divisions between the different types of suppliers and exporters were, in practice, far from precise. In the listing of ships which visited Newfoundland, which accompanies a number of the censi taken during the seventeenth century (1677, C.O. 1.41:30:24-25; 1679, C.O. 1.43:110; 1699, C.O. 194.1:333-346; and 1700, C.O:194.2:45-53), are found both fishing ships (ie. Western Adventurers) with only one or two fishing boats, (indicating that they were heavily involved in trading for fish as well as fishing) and Sack ships with one or two fishing boats (indicating that during slack periods during the fishing season their crews were engaged in fishing[9]). Davies (1980:270-71) clarifies some of the reasons why it is often difficult to separate fishing from Sack ships:

> Acting as Customs officers, and enforcing the port dues required, naval officers could require a nominal sum of 2/6d from Fishing ships, and up to 8 pounds from trading vessels, or sac ships. This gave them a clear means of distinguishing between the two types of vessels. But, vessels calling at Newfoundland did not always perform one function: a fishing vessel might well load cargo intended for sale, and, because fish was the only commodity with which the residents, and bye boatkeepers could bargain, *purchase* fish caught and cured by boatkeepers to add to the catch made by the ship's crew, and thereby perform the function of a sac ship..... Presumably, to avoid heavy port dues, the master would have his ship classified as *fishing ship*, yet, obviously be supporting the boat fishery.....[10] Altbough it was true that some vessels only operated

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[9] This has a parallel in the merchants' room on the Labrador in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Ch. 4.

as trading vessels, the act of trading for fish to add to the ship's catch was so common that it is difficult to see how the distinction can so positively be made between *fishing* and *sac.*

Though the distinction may have been difficult for customs officers to make, it can and was made, and forcefully so, by those involved in the Newfoundland trade at that time. However, the distinction was not to be made in terms of whether the ships were involved in trading in the broadest sense, but rather in terms of what would now be considered under relations of production.

C. Relations of Production.

It is generally recognized that there were three classes involved in the Newfoundland fishery economy, at least prior to approximately 1840. These were the merchants, labourers, and the planters. Most of those fishing were labourers, workers owning little more in the production process than their personal effects. The merchants were merchant capitalists involved primarily in trade in supplies and fish rather than being capitalists directly involved in producing dried cod. It is the fish producers, the planters and bye boat keepers, which have traditionally presented a problem in classification, at least after 1840; in particular, whether they were disguised capitalists, disguised labour, or something else, such as peasants or independent producers.

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10. Davies is referring here to the distinction he makes between a "ship fishery" and a "boat fishery." Davies (1980:12) divides the fishery on technological lines into a "ship fishery" and a "boat fishery", this seems, however, to be mistaken as there is not evidence that fishing was, at least after the very beginnings of the Newfoundland cod trade, ever carried out to any significant degree from the fishing ships themselves.

It is the argument of this thesis that they are best classified as small capitalist, *petit bourgeoise* in the mold of many of the fishers described by Thompson (1983) for nineteenth and early twentieth century Great Britain. They were in fact, similar in many respects to the class of small producers which, at least in terms of numbers of people, dominated industrial production in the Western world through to at least the mid-nineteenth century (see Samuel 1977).

A number of characteristics of the planters which might seem to exclude them from being classified as essentially capitalist should not be taken as such. Among these characteristics are their smallness and sometimes poverty; that they often were directly involved in the labour process; that many might fail and fall into the ranks of the labourers; and that some labourers might rise to become planters. All of these were characteristic of much capitalist production in nineteenth century Europe (see Samuel 1977). The essential characteristics which defined the planters as capitalists were that they owned significant parts (at times all) of the means of production and that they depended, at least in the long term, on hired labour for their production.

Those characteristics which the planters possessed which might be thought to exclude them from classification as capitalists are all directly related to the generally small scale of the vast majority of the planters' fishing operations in the inshore fishery. The smallness of most inshore fishing operations was largely the product of technological factors, in particular that the basic production unit[11]

[11] Except in the bank and the Labrador floater fishery (discussed in detail in the following two chapters), where larger vessels, schooners, were necessary to get to the fishing

was a hook and line boat with a crew of about "5, that is 3 for to catch the fish, two to save it" (Yonge 1963:56), though many boats could and were operated by only two men. As a result of this, expansion in the inshore fishery generally involved the simple duplication of these small fishing units, rather than the establishment of larger production units based on some other technology. The large inshore fishing planter had no technological advantages over the small, and he probably had greater problems with labour discipline and recruitment, as well as having greater capital costs. The relative disadvantage of the large planter would have been increased as the smaller fishing units were able to apply the labour of wives and children with the growth of the truly resident population in the eighteenth century. Directly related to this was that for the successful planter the safest and usually the most profitable method of expansion was to go into the supplying business rather than to directly expand production of dried cod. So, while the unsuccessful planter fell into the ranks of the labourers or emigrated to New England (or both), in general the successful one, rather than becoming a larger and larger fishing capitalist, became a merchant.

The logic of expansion in the Newfoundland inshore fishery also applied to the merchants; for them the quickest and easiest method of procuring fish was to supply a greater number of fishing production units, by financing the creation of new units, rather than either going directly into the production of dried cod or increasing their level of supply to established planters to increase their level of

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grounds.

production.

What separated the *fishing ships* operating as fish merchants from the Sack ships were their different methods of obtaining dried cod or, the other aspect of the transactions, their different relations with the primary production units of that cod. The *fishing ships* operating as fish merchants at Newfoundland usually did so as general suppliers of the trade and their method of obtaining dried cod involved supplying planters and receiving their fish, at least to the value of the supplies, in return. They attempted to establish the merchant-fisher economic relationship that has been considered characteristic of the Newfoundland fishing economy and in which the act of supply in practice usually guaranteed the supplier all of the fishing crew's production. Usually not in a position to supply the fishery at Newfoundland, Sack ships operated as *partial Adventurers*, trading in fish but not advancing supplies for the fishery. Sack ships could only purchase fish from independent fishers or they could operate as *hucksters*, trading for fish which was already promised to a supplying migratory or resident merchant.

It is this merchant-fisher economic relationship which has been claimed (E. Antler 1981 and Sider 1986) to have been the central characteristic of the economy of the Newfoundland inshore fishery (in the family fishery), at least for later periods (from the early part of the nineteenth century). The central characteristic of this relationship was that for most fishers, suppliers and exporters were, by law and tradition, the same. In this economy, often mistakenly labeled the *truck system*,[12] the merchant by supplying the fisher with gear necessary for the

fishery, obtained exclusive right to the total catch of the fisher, whether or not it covered or exceeded the value or price of the goods supplied. In so doing the merchant, at least, attempted to both guarantee his supply of dried cod by making it difficult, if not impossible, for the fishers to sell their production to any one other than himself, and to guarantee his profit by controlling both the price the fishers paid for fishery supplies and the price he paid for their fish.

It has been argued (see, especially, Sider 1986), that this merchant-fisher relationship, and the family fishery, was the outcome of a struggle by the West Country fishing interests first to stop permanent settlement and second, having failed at that, to outlaw private property in land. This took the form of a struggle between the migratory fishing interests and the settled population in alliance with the *London Sack ships*. This conflict between migratory fishing interests and the settled population in alliance with the *London Sack ships*, which historians have long made central to the understanding of Newfoundland history,[13] has been shown by Matthews (1968) and Davies (1983) to be essentially illusionary.

Matthews (1968:73, 235-36) argued further, however, that there could be no conflict between migratory fish merchants and the Sack ships. His reason for arguing such is that there was a long term contradiction facing the Sack ships when they purchased fish which a Western Adventurer had a lien on by virtue of

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[12] This is mistaken because *truck* is, properly, the payment of *wages* in goods, and, as will be argued below, planters cannot be characterised as the employees of the merchants.

[13] The model for this argument was laid out by Prowse (1895) and followed to differing extents by later historians and anthropologists.

having supplied the fish's producer. The contradiction facing the Sack ships was that they could only operate if the fishing ships kept supplying the residents, for without that supply fish could not have been produced, and yet, in taking away the fish so produced, the Sack ships served to undermine the economic viablity of the suppliers.

Though this long term contradiction did exist for the Sack ships in general, it did not for the individual Sack ship master in pursuit of a profitable voyage. During periods of poor markets for salt cod or other problems for the trade, the Sack ship merchants could, unlike the Western Adventurers, quite easily shift their efforts to some other type of trading activity. One of the reasons for the establishment of *resident* merchants from the fishing ships was in response to the problem of competition from the partial Adventurers. The fishing ships and their successors, the resident fish merchants, were not against settlement *per se*, and indeed, by the end of the seventeenth century had become dependent upon it, but were only against Sack ships inserting themselves in the middle of the fishing cycle and purchasing fish which the fishing ships considered their own by right of having supplied the producers of the fish. The conflict between fishing ships and Sack ships (British or American) was real and was the model for a conflict which continued through to the twentieth century.

The character of the economic relations which existed within the different classes of production units, that is the relations between masters and servants, is little discussed in the primary historical record. However, it does seem clear that most of the servants of all three groups of producers (ie. planters, bye boat

keepers, and the operators of the fishing ships) came annually to Newfoundland prior to 1750 (Davies 1980:258-61; Head 1972:426-27; Matthews 1968:276-78), though this varied from area to area. Conception Bay, for example, seems to have had a more settled population of servants (see Tables 1, 2, and 4), especially during periods of warfare, when most servants would have had no choice but to stay over the winter in Newfoundland.

On the fishing ships it would seem that often the whole crew, including the ship's master, were employees of the owner or outfitter of the voyage, though there were many different arrangements made, with, for example, the ship's master or other member of the crew being sole or part owner and, or, outfitter of the voyage (viz. Cell 1969:8-18). It does seem clear, however, that as long as the fishing ships were involved directly in fishing, the payment of the crews could be, and probably usually was, in shares, which at this period in the inshore fishery was one third of the fish taken (Cell 1969:16). However, as the fishing ships became more and more involved in the export of supply aspects of the trade, a pure share arrangement proved inadequate and wages came to dominate, though the two systems could be combined (for example a guaranteed wage on top of a share or a bonus paid on the amount of fish caught by fishers on wages[14]).

Much has been made of the significance of the existence of these different forms of payment by anthropologists, historians, and economists (see E. Antler

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[14] Both of these arrangements existed on the Labrador fishery in the twentieth century, see Chapter 4.

1981, S. Antler 1975, Innis 1954, Sider 1986) and in particular of what, seems to have been, a general shift from the payment of wages in shares to the payment of a fixed wage (see S. Antler 1975). In the "Answers to Heads of Enquiry relating to ye Fishery and trade of Newfoundland"[15] in reply to the question "If the old custom of carrying on the fishery upon Shares is now continued & to what extent?" it is stated that from the early eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century that the custom had dissappeared among the fishing ships. This shift was, however, simply it is symptomatic of the shift of the migraratory *fishing ships* from a direct involvement in fishing to a primary interest in supply and trade in the fishing industry. The continued interest shown by the British governments of the period in this issue was because the shift indicated the dying out of the traditional migratory ship fishery which the Royal Navy had supported as a *nursery for seamen.*

Even less is known about the economic relations which existed between the bye boat keepers and the planters and their respective servants than about the economic relations existing within the ship fishery. It would seem, however, that there was a mixture of payment in shares and in wages and, probably, combinations of the two systems. I would suggest that, as long as they had to employ migratory servants, the planters probably were forced to operate to a greater

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[15] For example C.O. 194.7:99-116; these were annual reports of the Naval Commanders and Governors to the Board of Trade and the Colonial Office in London. They were undertaken from the late seventeenth to early nineteenth century, covering essentially the same set of questions for the whole period.

extent than the bye boat keepers on the payment of wages rather than shares (when shares were the method of payment, the share for servants was *half their hand*—either the value of half of the fish produced or the value of half of the fish which they individually caught—rather than the one third which was traditional in the migratory ship fishery) putting them at the greater risk which that form of payment entailed. Previous to a population of resident servants the planters must have had to hire their servants through their supplying English merchants, who would have had to guarantee the wages of those servants.

The legal framework of both the migratory and resident fisheries continued to be derived directly from maritime law, as it had been when the fishing had been a purely migratory effort. The servants of all three types of producers, as well as the servants of the migratory merchants and Sack ships, had a lien on the product of the voyage, the *fish and the oil* (i.e. cod liver oil), for their wages, even when it had passed out of the hands of their immediate employer. The supplier of the necessities of the voyage for the current season, the *current supplier*, also had a maritime lien on the product of the voyage which took presidence over all others save for the claims of the fishery servants for their wages. It was probably in the period between 1700 and 1750 that the specifically Newfoundland version of these two ancient maritime precepts came to be formulated under the *right of the fishermen to follow the fish and the oil* and the *law of current supply* (which will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter).

II. The History of Conception Bay and Brigus to 1750.

A. Conception Bay.

Conception Bay is one of a number of large bays which dominate the seascape of the northern coast of Newfoundland. It is situated on the Avalon Peninsula in the southeast corner of the island. Lying closer to Europe than any other part of Newfoundland, it was the site of some of the earliest European fishing activity and settlement. The eastern shore of the Bay has always been very much the most populous and is characterised in the central and southern parts by a succession of deep-fjord like bays. The best inshore fishing grounds are to be found, however, at the northern end of the Bay, especially around Bay-de-Verde, and on the more rugged western side of the Bay. There are areas of, at least in Newfoundland terms, good agricultural land around Harbour Grace, Brigus, and in the Harbour Main district.

English settlement of Newfoundland commenced in the second decade of the seventeenth century with John Guy's colony at Cupids. The records from this colony indicate that were no other European winter settlements in Conception Bay at that time nor any evidence that there had been any previous to its establishment (see Quinn 1979:157f). After the failure of that colonization attempt, settlement took place first at Harbour Grace and Carbonear, circa 1630 (Cell 1969:87-8). Settlement proceeded at Bay-de-Verde, Port-de-Grave, Bay Roberts, Brigus, and other communities around the Bay sometime after that, all based, unlike the Cupids colony, entirely on the fish trade.

The first censi in which the communities in Conception Bay are enumerated were taken in the 1670's, directly following the period of initial settlement for most of the then settled communities of Conception Bay. The 1670s was a decade in which catches and the economic well being of the Newfoundland fisheries were consistently very poor (Matthews 1968:177-78, Davies 1980:5, 10-11). The first enumeration (C.O. 1.34:79-80)[16] is from 1674. In it the population of Newfoundland is given as "87 planters and "Every plantr. keeps two Boats and to each Boat five Menn. In the Whole Nine hundred menn.", while there are, "In Conception bay 29 Plantrs. & familyes" and, therefore, about 300 servants.

In 1675 (C.O. 1.35:151) there is the first listing of the names of the planters and their concerns by community in Conception Bay. The population is summarised in Figure 2.3. In this census there is evidence of the early development of agriculture in Conception Bay, in the existence at Cupids of, "Steph. Atkins keepr. of M. Butler's cattle."[17]

The census from 1677 (C.O. 199.16:24-5 and C.O. 1.41:30:24-25) is a particularly detailed enumeration of the population of Conception Bay and of Newfoundland and is summarised in Figure 2.4. In this census there is a

[16] The Colonial Office records are to be found in the table of references under "Colonial Office" and in order of year, they are available on microfilm from the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador and in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

[17] A handwritten transcript of the original document reads "M. Butler's castle,". This would seem a mistranscription as it is the only reference found to a *castle* in or about Cupids and there is a Tho. Butler residing in Port-de-Grave (probably at what is now Clark's Beach) with "50 head Cattle & 20 of sheep" recorded for that community. Barakat's (1973:26) reading of this document also interprets the word as "cattle".

description of the winter activities as well as a rough estimate of the numbers of servants staying over the winter (C.O. 199.16:28):

> Employments: As soon as the Winter comes on, they employ their servants in the woods to fell trees and saw them into boards to build boats and make Oars for the fishermen [ie. migratory] and themselves against the next season.... Servants: About half the Servants that belong to the Inhabitts. go home for England every yeare and return to their Mastrs. at the beginning of the fishing season.

An estimate of the winter population of Conception Bay is not possible, however, as the numbers of planters and their immediate families who returned to England is not given.

The extent of agricultural activity in Conception Bay and in Newfoundland is also outlined in this census and is summarised in Figure 2.5. Gardens were distributed fairly evenly throughout the Conception Bay area (with only Bryants Cove lacking any gardens), as were hogs and cattle (with the exception of Bay-de-Verde, which had none). Sheep, however, were much less evenly distributed, with almost all being found in the three communities of Carbonear, Bay Roberts, and Port-de-Grave. The numbers of gardens gives only a rough indication of agricultural activity as they do not indicate garden size. The numbers of livestock, especially cattle and sheep, would seem, however, to give an indication of such. It is clear from this figure, as well as earlier studies (eq. Head 1976:14), that level of agricultural activity in Conception Bay was greater than that of the rest of Newfoundland at this early date. It would seem, in fact, that agricultural activity was greater at this time than it was in the next century (see below).

The census also shows the size and equipment of the fishery at the time (see Figure 2.6). The correspondence between the number of dwelling houses and the number of stages would seem to indicate that virtually every household at this time was directly involved in the fishing and curing of cod, both in Conception Bay and Newfoundland as a whole. When the communities are examined individually this census indicates that this correspondence also applied on that level.

The largest communities in Conception Bay at this date were Carbonear, Bay-de-Verde, Harbour Grace, and Port-de-Grave. Their make-up is outlined in Figure 2.7. The relatively large size of Bay-de-Verde, which to the present is primarily a fishing community and which in the next century would be much smaller than the other major Conception Bay communities, emphasizes the importance of the local inshore fishery for the communities at this time.

The population of Conception Bay and of Newfoundland in 1692 and 1693 are given in C.O. 1.68:83 and C.O. 1.68:89, respectively, and are summarised in Figure 2.8. These two censi are confusing at first sight. It is not immediately clear what the numbers listed under the number of men should be understood as. It is clear that it cannot be the combination of men servants and planters nor the number of planters. It would seem, therefore, that the figures under the number of men, women, and children are probably the winter populations of men, women, and children. The number of planters can be estimated by taking the number of stages and assuming that it is approximately equal to the number of planters; this ratio exists for the other censi of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. While there are no enumerations of agricultural activity,

there is evidence that there was still a significant amount of it around Conception Bay, in particular, in the listing of Bay Roberts as a "Cattle Plantation" (with only two men living there).

These censi were taken during a period in which the planter fishery prospered because of the War of the Grand Alliance, during which the resident fishery enjoyed high prices for dried cod and a monopoly of supply as no fishing ships visited Newfoundland between 1689 and 1693 (Matthews 1968:241, 246). As a result of the increased costs of supply and of wages the number of servants coming to Newfoundland decreased, as did the size of the average fishing operation (as measured by the number of boats versus the number of stages). The changes and percentage changes are summarised in Figure 2.9.

In 1697, during the War of the Grand Alliance with France and with d'Iberville in occupation of most of Newfoundland, the population of the settlements around Conception Bay was taken by Beaudoin (1900:69)[18] and is summarised in Figure 2.10. While it is not clear here, the 106 *habitants* should be understood as the equivalent of *house-keepers* or planters, and represents the number of families, as is made clear in other contexts in Beaudoin.

Beaudoin also gives a description of Conception Bay which supports the view that the region was more settled than the rest of the island and that it operated under different economic conditions.

[18] Since Beaudoin did not visit all of Newfoundland I have not used his population figures for all of the island.

> Cette coste de la baye de la Conception est bien mieux establie et plus peupleé que celle de Rognousse à Saint-Jean.... (1900:54-55)
>
> This coast of Conception Bay is much better established and more populated than that of Renews to St. John's....

> Hàvre-de-Grâce a quatorze habitants, et Carbonniére vingt-deux, tous trés bien establis; les mieux bâtis de toute Terreneuve. Nous n'y trouvons que des magasins de morue, d'huile et pain: point de meubles. Ces deux endroits fournissaient aux autres habitations anglaises tous leur besoins: ce qui y attirait un grand trafic. Il s'y trouve des gens de cent mil livres de bien.... (58)
>
> Harbour Grace has fourteen planters [or plantations], and Carbonear twenty-two, all very well established, the best constructed of all Newfoundland. We found only stores of cod, oil and bread: no movables [ie. movable property]. These two places supplied the other English settlements with all their needs: which attracted a great trafic there. There are found here persons of one hundred thousand pounds of property....

The picture of an agriculturally active community is also supported by Beaudoin;

> La viande fraische ne nous manque pas icy. Nous mangeons des vaches de ce hâvre [ie. Carbonear] et de Hàvre-de-Grâce, qui y estaient en grande quantité. (Beaudoin 1900:58)
>
> We don't lack fresh meat here. We eat the cows of this harbour [ie. Carbonear] and of Harbour Grace, which were there in great numbers.

He also mentions numbers of sheep and cattle in the Port-de-Grave area.

The censi to be found in records from the British Colonial Office from the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century show that the population of Conception Bay as a whole also seems to have recovered from the depredations of the war years, though with the start of the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-13; the population seems to have dropped again; Figure 2.11 gives the population of Conception Bay for the turn of the century and the first decade of the

eighteenth century. Taken together it would seem that at the end of the seventeenth century the population of Conception Bay was around 100 planters and their families. While the total winter population is given for 1698, with no breakdown as found in the summer figures (ie. planters, mistresses, servants, etc.), one cannot estimate the winter population for the other years as it is impossible to say what numbers of *inhabitants* returned to England during the winter season in any year. While the figures are probably none too accurate, it would seem that the number of inhabitants varied quite significantly from one year to the next. It is clear from these censi, however, that the population was still quite centralised, with more than 85% of the population in 1698 being found between Brigus and Carbonear, and more than 80% found there in 1700.

These figures suggest a number of things about the pattern of settlement and population of Conception Bay during the seventeenth century. Among them are that the relative density of population and the greater extent of agricultural activities suggest that Conception Bay had a more settled population than the rest of Newfoundland, with the possible exception of St. John's. The permanent character of the resident population, however, cannot be pushed too far as even at this date Conception Bay seems to have been an area both of immigration and of emigration (as was the whole of Newfoundland). Emigration was mostly to New England, as was reported by an English naval captain in 1687 (Innis 1954:104):

> I am told that the New England vessels last year (1686) carryed out of Conception Bay upwards of 500 men some of which were headed up in casks because they should not be discovered.

Part of the, at times, large annual variation in the numbers of inhabitants was due to this pattern or emigration.

It would seem that the population of Newfoundland during the seventeenth century was determined, as it was to be right through to the nineteenth century, by the balance of immigration from the British Isles and emigration to the North American colonies, the magnitude of the balance being determined by the economic conditions of the fishery. Another part of this variation was probably due to the ease with which, fishermen could switch between fishing as inhabitants and doing so as bye-boatmen.

In the eighteenth century the general enumerations of the population became more regular. However the more detailed enumerations and descriptions of Brigus and the other smaller communities in Conception Bay ceased after 1715. The enumerations, found in the "Returns for the Fishery" are not as carefully done as those from the seventeenth century. As the enumerations were taken from the reports of the different Fishing Admirals of the major harbours, the most common problem would seem to have been one of the underreporting of population with some of the smaller communities not being enumerated. Overall, therefore, it seems best to accept the population figures from that era as representing general trends in population and population growth, but radical year to year variations cannot be accepted without some other source for verification. As Head (1976:54-56) has shown, the population of Newfoundland stayed fairly stagnant for the half century before and after the turn of the seventeenth century. The summer population remained between 400 and 1400 people from 1700

to 1750 (see Table 1 and Graph 1). The winter population, which, to at least some degree, gives a better idea of the settled population, remained between 400 and 1300 (see Table 2 and Graph 2). The number of fishing boats employed by the inhabitants, while varying widely from year to year, reached a high point of 197 in 1700 and after that did not rise above 170 while at times dropping to less than 30 (see Table 3 and Graph 3). At the same, time neither the number of boats of the bye-boat keepers nor those of the fishing ships showed any general increase, suggesting that the general stagnation in the growth of the inhabitant population reflects a more general stagnation in the fishery (see Table 3 and Graphs 4 and 5).

The census data also suggest that there was no dramatic change in the relation of summer population to winter population. If the ratio of summer to winter populations can be assumed to indicate the degree to which the inhabitant population had become truly settled, then the census data suggests that the population was not significantly more permanent in the first half of the eighteenth century than it had been in the last decade of the previous century (see Table 4).

The size and make-up or crews, while changing dramatically from one year to the next do not do so in the form of any overall trends. Neither the ratio of male servants to masters, which would be higher if the size of fishing crews based on hired labour was to rise (see Table 5a), nor the ratio of the rest of the population to masters, which would rise if the size or numbers of crews based on family labour was to increase (see Table 6), show any general changes. The general prosperity of the planters, as measured by the ratio of boats to masters,

(assuming a higher number indicates greater prosperity,) (see Table 7), as well as the ratio of male servants to masters, also do not show any general trends in the period from 1700 to 1750. By comparison, after 1750 all of these features show dramatic changes following the upward movement in population which takes place from that decade.

However, the demographic basis for the rise in population which marked the second half of the eighteenth century is at least hinted at in the percentage change in the make-up of the population, in particular in the increase in the percentage of women (see Table 8). Whereas in the seventeenth century the number of masters (ie. planters) generally exceeded the number of mistresses[19] by 1720 the number of masters and the number of mistresses are generally equal. Perhaps more important, though less clearly evident, is the rise in the absolute and relative numbers of female servants which, taking into consideration the more permanent character of the female population (see Table 8), it may be argued, represents the establishment of a resident working class and the foundation of a truly permanent population.

It can be hypothesized that the stagnation of population growth around Conception Bay, while the population of Newfoundland as a whole was rising, was because, having reached a saturation point in terms of the local inshore fishing effort and with no technological innovations allowing increased

[19] The assumption here is that the category of mistress overwhelmingly meant the wives of planters. The censi which give a detailed enumeration of the population, 1675 to 1677 and 1708, support this assumption.

production, the initial response was one of emigration to underexploited regions of Newfoundland, of which there were a number in the first half of the eighteenth century, in particular along the northwest coast.

B. Brigus.

The first reference to Brigus as a place is by a resident of John Guy's colony at Cupids in February of 1613, "...master Thomas Willughby and my selfe [Henry Crout] was at Breegas...." (Quinn 1979:170). There is nothing in this account to suggest that there was any settlement in Brigus at this point.[20]

While local tradition maintains that Brigus was settled shortly after the Cupids colony was established (see Bartlett 1940:1; Leamon 197-:2 ff.), there is no written evidence of any settlement until the 1670s. A reasonable hypothesis is that Brigus was first settled sometime in the period between 1640 and 1670 during a period of general growth in the number of residents coincident with the period of the English Civil War and the wars with the Dutch (see Innis 1954:97-9). The first enumerations of Brigus are found in the years 1674, 1675, and 1677. They give a picture of the community at the end of the wars with Holland at the period when permanent settlement was beginning in earnest in Newfoundland. In 1674 (C.O. 1.34:79-80) there are two planters listed as inhabiting "Brigasse in the North" and, for Newfoundland as a whole, that, "Every plantr. keeps two Boats

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[20] Compare this to Seary's (1971:184) statement that the first reference is to *Brega* in circa 1630-40. The earlier account would seem to bring into doubt Seary's contention that Brigus's name is of French origin.

and to each Boat ffive Menn", so the summer population of Brigus was probably between 20 and 30 persons.

In the census taken in 1675 (C.O. 1.35:151) is found the first list of planters by name for "Brigus by N." It is summarised in Figure 2.12. How many of the "men" (ie. servants) were migratory workers from the British Isles and what number were permanent residents is not stated. In the census taken in 1677 (C.O. 199.16:24-25), however, it is reported that about half the servants remained on the island. Perhaps with a larger number staying over in the more settled regions. It is not clear how many of the inhabitants remained in Brigus during the winter.

Local tradition maintains that the ancestors of the present population were the original settlers at Brigus. In particular that the Spracklin and the Percy families were the first to inhabit Brigus (see Bartlett 1940:1; Leamon 197-:2 ff.; Smith 1936; Lench 1925:14). The documentary evidence, however, would seem to suggest a later arrival for the direct ancestors of the present population.

In the census of 1677 (C.O. 1.41:30:24-25) there is a more detailed listing of the planters and their concerns (see Figure 2.13). The census from 1681 (C.O. 1.47:90) also lists the inhabitants by name and the size of their households (see Figure 2.14).

The census of 1692 (C.O. 1.68:83) contains only the census summary (see Figure 2.15). Taking the difference between the number of men and the number of servants, the number of boats, and the number of stages, it would seem that

there were five or six planters.

In his account Beaudoin (1900:68-9) estimated the population of "Brige" for the year 1697 (see Figure 2.16). Beaudoin (1900:52-3) also gives one of the earliest, albeit short, descriptions of Brigus:

> Briges, habitation anglaise assez bien establie, ou il y avait environ soixante hommes....
>
> Brigus, a quite well established English settlement; where there were around sixty men....

Beaudoin (1900:54) also makes references to the early presence of Irish catholics there.

> Les habitants de Briges sont aussy venu, et huit Irlandais catholiques que les Anglais traitent icy commes des esclaves....
>
> The inhabitants of Brigus have also come, and eight Irish catholics, that the English treat here like slaves....

The census figures suggest that the population of Brigus grew from a summer population of around 30 persons in the early 1670's, to near 70 by the middle of the 1690's. The continuity of family names from 1674 to, at least, 1681[21] and the number of women and children suggest that at this date we are dealing with something a bit more permanent than simply migratory fishermen who happen to have spent a winter or two in Brigus. The resident character of the population is further suggested by the mention of two gardens in 1677. Unfortunately, in the censi taken after 1677 there is no information given about the extent of

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21. It seems reasonable to assume that Matthew Gartor, Matt. Gastrell and Math. Gostale are simply variant spellings.

agricultural production. However, as it was a period of warfare and in light of Beaudoin's (see above) descriptions of the agricultural activity in Conception Bay as a whole towards the end of the century, the agricultural effort was probably increasing at a rate at least proportional to that of the population.

Beaudoin claimed that d'Iberville burnt Brigus in 1697. However, the censi taken at the turn of the century by the English indicates that it was quite rapidly re-established and would seem to have been repopulated by 1701. The censi for this period are summarised in Figure 2.17.

The census of 1708 (C.O. 194.4:253-60) lists the individual Brigus planters by name (see Figure 2.18). The family names listed in the census of 1708 suggest that the inhabitants of Brigus in the 1670's and 1680's were not the people that repopulated the community at the turn of the century. Neither are the family names found in this census those to be found in records from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There is no further mention of Brigus in the Returns of the Fishery for the rest of the eighteenth century, which suggests strongly that Brigus was a fairly average small community with an economy based on the relatively limited inshore fishery in its immediate vicinity. There seems nothing in the rest of the historical record to suggest that before the midpoint of the eighteenth century Brigus was a major centre of commercial or productive activity, as were the communities of Harbour Grace and Carbonear at that time.

FIGURES

Figure 2.1
Average ratio of "boats of planters" to "masters."

1698	1702-09	1715	1720-27	1730-39	1740-49
1.34	1.38	1.66	1.26	1.05	1.12

Figure 2.2
Average ratio male servants to masters, 1698-1749.

1698	1702-09	1715	1720-27	1730-39	1740-49
5.06	5.28	6.42	4.44	5.90	6.67

Figure 2.3
Population of inhabitants of Conception Bay and Newfoundland, 1675.

	Conception Bay	Newfoundland
Planters	38†	146†
Wives	20‡	68‡
Male Children	38	103
Female Children	25	84
Men	311	973
Boats	69	277
Stages	35	127

† Includes two women.
‡ Includes one mother.

Figure 2.4
Population of inhabitants of Conception Bay and Newfoundland, 1677.

	Conception Bay	Newfoundland
Hous-keepers (ie. planters)	43	162
Wives (ie. of planters)	24	94
Children	88	267
Resident population	155	523
Men Servants	393	1,327
Women Servants	2	15
Total summer population of inhabitants.	550	1,865

Figure 2.5
Agriculture in Conception Bay and Newfoundland, 1677.

Numbers of:	Conception Bay	The rest of Newfoundland	All of Newfoundland
Cattle	241	239	480
Sheep	65	66	131
Hogs	207	638	845
Gardens	46	68	114

Ratio of:	Conception Bay	The rest of Newfoundland	All of Newfoundland
Cattle to households	5.6	2.0	3.0
Sheep to households	1.5	.6	.8
Hogs to households	4.8	5.4	5.2
Gardens to households	1.1	.6	.7

Figure 2.6
Inhabitants' equipment for the fishery, 1677.

	Conception Bay	Newfoundland
Boats	90	334
Stages	44	163.5
Roomes	90	334
Dwelling Houses	44	167
Store houses & Lodging for Servants	74	303

Figure 2.7
Population and properties of the inhabitants of the major Conception Bay communities, 1677.

	Carbonear	Harbour Grace	Port-de-Grave	Bay-de-Verde
Hous-keepers	11	10	4	8
Wives	9	2	2	4
Sons	15	7	3	2
Daughters	20	3	1	9
Men Servants	107	35	49	109
Women Servants	0	0	0	0
Dwelling Houses	14	7	5	8
Store Houses & Lodging for Serv.	18	9	10	15
Boats	25	11	10	20
Stages	11	9	4	9
Roomes	25	11	10	20
Cattle	79	38	34	0
Sheep	22	0	18	1
Hoggs	48	27	38	36
Gardens	12	9	4	11
Ktls. fish of boats	2130	1890	880	1700

Figure 2.8
Conception Bay and Newfoundland population of inhabitants, 1692 and 1693.

	1692		1693	
	Conception Bay	Newfound-land	Conception Bay	Newfound-land
Men	260	1161	319	843
Women	38	139	40	141
Children	86	261	143	358
Planters†	60	220	65	220
Servants	291	1012	274	1098
Stages	61	218	67	218
Boats	84	274	77	303

† estimate.

Figure 2.9
Conception Bay and Newfoundland changes and per cent changes, 1677 to 1693.

	Numbers		Per cent	
	Conception Bay	Newfound-land	Conception Bay	Newfound-land
Planters†	27	58	63	36
Women	16	47	54	50
Children	55	91	63	34
Servants	-121	- 229	- 31	- 17
Stages	23	54	52	33
Boats	- 23	- 31	- 26	- 9

† estimate.

Figure 2.10
Conception Bay population, 1697.

hommes (men)	habitants (inhabitants)	chalopues (boats)	morues (cod)
822	106	154	81,000

Figure 2.11
Conception Bay population of inhabitants, 1698-1702.

	Masters	Men Servants	Summer Mistresses & Women Servants	Children	Total Population	Winter Total Population
1698	82	415	61	123	681	331
1699	†	†	†	†	947	†
1700	†	†	†	†	1137	†
1701	142	†	†	†	†	†
1702	79	344	80	213	716	†

† not given.

Figure 2.12
Brigus, list of inhabitants, 1675.

Planters names	Children Ma	Fem	Men	Boats	Stages
John Gifford & wife	1	1	8	2	1
Matthew Gartor	1	1	8	2	1
Richd. Webb & wife	2	-	7	2	1

Figure 2.13

Brigus, list of inhabitants and properties, 1677.

"Beregues"	Wives	Sons	Daughters	Men Servants	Women Servants
Matt. Gastrell	0	0	0	6	0
Jn. Gifford	1	1	2	7	0
Rich Webb	1	2	0	1	0

	Dwelling Houses	Store Houses	Lodging for Serv.	Stages	Roomes
Matt. Gastrell	1	3	1	1	1
Jn. Gifford	1	2	0.	1	2
Rich Webb	1	1	1	1	1

	Cattle	Sheep	Hoggs	Ktls. fish of boats	Boats
Matt. Gastrell	12	0	1	190	1
Jn. Gifford	0	0	0	190	2
Rich Webb	0	0	10	200	1

Figure 2.14

Brigus, list of inhabitants and properties, 1681.

"Brigges"	wife & child.	boats	Servants
Math. Gostale		1	5
Jn. Gifford	wife & 4 child.	2	10
Hen. Marshall		1	3
Richd. Webb		1	3

Figure 2.15

Brigus population of inhabitants, 1692.

No. of boats	No. of men	No. of women	No. of children	No. of Stages	No. of Servants
6	22	2	4	5	16

Figure 2.16
Brigus population, 1697.

hommes	habitants	chalopues	morues
70	11	12	6000

Figure 2.17
Brigus population of inhabitants, 1698-1715.

Year	Planters	Servants	Women	Children	Boats	Winter inhabitants
1698	6	22	3	3	6	15
1699		42†			7	‡
1700		56†			10	‡
1701	11	‡	‡	‡	11	‡
1702	7	35	4	16	7	‡
1708	10	28	4	11	11	‡
1715	6	20	5	10	8	‡

† Total summer population. ‡ Not given.

Figure 2.18
Brigus, list of inhabitants, 1708.

	Wife	Children	Servants	Boats keept	Skiffs
James Guttorage		10	1	1	
Francis Babby	1		2		1
Wm. Clemens			2		1
John Petten			3	1	
James Colesworth			1		1
Henry Bishop	1	3	2		1
David Rowlins	1				1
Hannah Moores		2	4	1	
George Mugford	1	6	1		1
Wm. Burtt			3		1
Total: 10	4	11	28	3	8

-Chapter Three-

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, 1750 TO 1870

The period from 1750 to about 1870 was one of overall growth and prosperity for Newfoundland and, particularly, for Conception Bay. It was the period in which the resident fishery came to totally dominate the cod fishery and a time in which the cod and seal fisheries were the central and predominant activities for virtually all of the island. It was also in this period when, according to S. Antler (1975), Sider (1986), and, though interpreted slightly differently, E. Antler (1981), the relations of production which characterized the fishery changed from those overtly capitalist in nature to those on the model of household or family production.

I. The Rise in Population.

From 1750 to 1830 Conception Bay was the centre of much of the island's economic growth. In the early part of the nineteenth century it even surpassed St. John's in economic importance and population. For Conception Bay the beginning of the steady rise in population which continued past the mid-point of the nineteenth century quite clearly began in the period between 1750 and 1755, later than in the less populous regions of the island (Head 1972). The resource base, which both allowed for the growth in population and which depended on that growth for its exploitation, was the cod fishery on the *French Shore* and, later, the Labrador. The Labrador fishery was combined, at the end of the eighteenth century, with the spring seal fishery. The growth in population

involved a continuing shift of migratory merchants to permanent residence in Newfoundland, a general rise in number, power, and importance of the planters, and growth of a resident population of labourers.

The main factor which allowed for this increase in the number, both absolute and relative, of residents at Newfoundland and which tipped the balance in favour of a purely resident fishing effort was, as Head (1972 and 1976, 94) has suggested, a result of an increased availablity of supplies from the south-west of Ireland (salt meats) and, especially, from New England (bread and flour, potatoes, lumber, and rum). These supplies were both cheaper and more reliable than those coming from England, whose own population was beginning to regularly consume more food than the country could produce. New Englanders began to enter the Newfoundland fish trade in significant numbers by the end of the seventeenth century and were well established and trading fairly extensively at Newfoundland by at least the 1720s (Davies 1980, 85-89, 349-50; Head 1972; 1976, 94; Matthews 1968, 155-56). This, as well as the introduction of the potato, the only staple carbohydrate which could be grown in Newfoundland,[1] making supplementary agriculture a possibility, made the life of the residents of Newfoundland much more secure than it previously had been.

The provisions from New England were cheaper than those from England. This decreased the cost of production for the planters relative to the migratory

[1] The climate and soil of Newfoundland are unsuitable for grain production and even the growing of root crops entails large amounts of labour relative to production in comparison to the fishery (see Crabb 1975, 50-51, 68).

fishers, both bye boat keepers and fishing ship fishers, who continued, it would seem, to get the majority of their supplies from Great Britain. The traders bringing provisions from New England also increased the competition among the purchasers of dried cod, doubtless further increasing the planters' independence.

The new sources of provisions combined with famine and economic recession in Ireland—a prime source of labourers since the seventeenth century, to make it increasingly easier for the Newfoundland planters to attract labourers to the island and, in turn, made Newfoundland a relatively attractive place for permanent settlement, for both masters and servants (Head 1972, 1976:93).

A resident population of servants, who, besides having only their labour power to sell, had to sell it to the planters (whatever the conditions of the markets for dried cod), put the planters in a more secure position. A readier supply of labour also probably meant that it was easier for the planters to operate on shares. As was mentioned above and will be discussed below (see Chapter 4), paying servants in shares was a less risky endeavour than paying wages and seems always to have been the preferred method of payment for those involved primarily in fishing. This was so because paying servants in shares spread the risks of a poor voyage and of poor prices, and meant that a master could not become insolvent because he could not meet his servants' wages.

These factors put the planters in a relatively stronger position *vis à vis* the migratory fishers, as well as *vis à vis* their own servants, than they had been in the seventeenth and first part of the eighteenth centuries. In previous centuries readier and cheaper supplies of labour and of supplies had been two of the

migratory fishers greatest advantages over the resident fishers.

Several other factors, resulting from the increasing number of truly resident servants, put the planters in an economically advantageous position in comparison to the migratory fishers. Among these advantages was that the increasing number of resident labourers allowed the planters to fulfill the potential they had always had of starting the cod fishery before the arrival of the migratory fishers and being able to continue fishing after they had been forced to return to Europe. A more important, and related factor was that increasing winter population allowed the planters to expand to activities outside of the summer season. The most important activities begun in this period were the winter and the spring seal fishery, the latter of which originated in Newfoundland in the 1790s. Ship and boat building was also undertaken during the winter. None of these activities could be carried on to any significant extent without over-wintering labourers.

This increase in the relative importance, numbers, and security of the resident population also resulted in the increasing shift of mercantile activity from Britain to Newfoundland. The establishment of resident merchants, perhaps better described as year-round merchants, as they were still based in Britain, was not entirely a new phenomenon, especially around Conception Bay. As mentioned in the previous chapter, resident merchants existed in Newfoundland from at least the 1670s. But the shift in mercantile activity to Newfoundland really started in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. This move was undertaken partly because it was a cheaper way of doing business. Chief Justice

John Reeves who resided in Newfoundland in the 1780s, described the situation (Reeves 1793, 86-7):

> As to this Mode of carrying on the Trade [i.e. by supplying residents], whatever the West Countrymen may say against those who practice it, they certainly introduced it themselves. It is well known at Newfoundland, that the most profitable Way of carrying on the Fishery is by supplying Boatkeepers, and taking Payment for the Supplies the Fish and Oil they catch.... Residency and Population have increased, because [sic] it is generally held the cheapest and most profitable Way of carrying on the Fishery by Residents; when this was known, it was easily seen that any Man who could land at Newfoundland with a Cargo of Supplies, was as fitted for carrying on the Fishery as a regular bred Fisherman....

The move of merchants' activity to Newfoundland was also partly in response to competition from New England traders. For independent planters the New Englanders were competitors for the planters' fish and in the sale of provisions. For the planters who were chronically in debt to the English merchants, the New Englanders, as interlopers at Newfoundland, could serve to break down the dependence of those planters on the merchants. The New Englanders would do this by purchasing fish, from the indebted planters, which had been held back at the end of the fishing season rather than used in payment for debts due for fishing supplies (Head 1976, 117-21).

This shift to residency was made easier because, in practice, the difference between the bye boat and resident fishers and between migratory and resident merchants had always been one of different economic strategies and the individuals involved in the fishery shifted easily and often being resident and migratory fishers. Under certain circumstances a bye boat keeper might start to be supplied

in Newfoundland (in a period of warfare this might involve less risk) or an inhabitant might return to Britain for his supplies (see Matthews 1968, 168-171). Many of the old migratory merchants either became resident merchants or dropped out of the fish business altogether, some even become planters (Matthews 1968, 170, 273, 276, 276-78, 375-78).

The relations of production under which this shift of fishing activity from a migratory to a resident effort took place were essentially unchanged from those which had prevailed in the previous century. Likewise, the legal framework regulating the relations of production in the fishery continued to be derived from maritime custom and law. The relations of production were regulated by two customs, later statutes, both of which were founded on the doctrine of *maritime lien*, a fundamental aspect of maritime law. The first of these customs became known as the *right of the fishermen to follow the fish and the oil* and was given statutory form in 15 Geo. III, cap 31, partially, and, fully, in 33 Geo. III, cap. 78, sec. 7, while being reconfirmed in 19 Victoria, cap. 14. In this custom the servants actually involved in the fishery (which included those curing the fish and supplying bait) had a maritime lien on the product of the voyage, i.e. the *fish and the oil*, for their wages, even when it had passed out of the hands of their immediate employer. The wages of fishermen and seaman also had presidence over all other claims in cases of insolvency (see Cell 1969, Chapter 1 and Roscoe 1882, 6-7, 67-70, 85-04, 98-102).

The second of these customs became known as the *law of current supply* and can be found in statutory form in *The Consolidated Statutes of Newfoundland*,

(1874;454-55). In this the supplier of the necessities of the voyage for the current season, the *current supplier*, also had a maritime lien on the product of the voyage which took presidence over all others save for the claims of the fishery servants for their wages.

According to S. Antler (1975, followed by E. Antler 1981 and Sider 1986) there existed, and perhaps arose, at this time a set of productive relations which were essentially different from those described above. This set of relations of production has been labelled the *household-based fishery* and will be discussed in more detail in the section dealing with the supposed demise of the planters' fishery below. However, the demographic characteristic this set of relations of production, based on family labour, would produce would be a steady decrease in the numbers and percentages of servants and an increase in those of masters and mistresses and should show up in the demografphic statistics. It is one of the theses of this work that while there are changes in the demographic character of Conception Bay in this period, these changes are the, by then, normal response to periods of warfare and not to a fundamental change in the relations of production.

While Head (1976, 56) places the start of the marked growth in population and economic activity for Conception Bay in the early 1730s, slightly later than other areas in Newfoundland, the upturn there actually began somewhat later, between the years 1750 and 1755 (see Tables 1 and 2, Graphs 1 and 2, and Figures 3.1 and 3.2). It was the end of the War of Austrian Succession, 1739-1748, and the normal boom following war which was the probable precipitating factor

for the upward surge in population as fishers and merchants rushed to take advantage of favourable markets following the war (Matthews.1968;384-85).

While there is a dramatic upturn in the total resident population in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the makeup of the resident population does not indicate consistent changes in other respects. As Head has observed, Conception Bay showed little increase in the proportion of resident to migratory fishers in the first half of the eighteenth century (1976, 82), and the level of fishing effort of the resident population reveals no significant change relative to the migratory fishers until the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century (see Figure 3.3). The percentage of the resident population which stayed the winter shows no consistent and significant changes before 1833; nor do the relative numbers of migratory servants show any consistent changes (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). This suggests that the planter fishery around Conception Bay still depended on migratory labour and further that, though the overall population had increased quite dramatically, the relations of production were not essentially different than earlier in the century. In the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century the number of Western Adventurers and bye boat keepers declined relative to the number of residents, within the context of a decrease in the overall fishing effort. When the level of fishing activity picked up again in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the fishery around Conception Bay was entirely a resident one (see Figure 3.3 and Table 3).

Besides the overall increase in the resident population, the most significant changes in it are the increases in both the relative and absolute numbers of

women, both "mistresses" and "female servants" (see Figure 3.6), and children (see Figure 3.7 and Tables 8, 9, and 10). These changes indicate a more permanent *resident* population, though little more.

In the period of the American Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, ie. from 1776 to 1815, several changes occurred in the makeup of the resident population. The most dramatic of these is the decline in both the absolute and relative numbers of servants (see Tables 1 and 2, and Figures 3.1 and 3.2) and, especially, in migratory servants of resident planters (see Figure 3.5). Censi from 1750 to 1776, show an increase in the population of servants along with the general rise in population. However, censi from the 1780s and 1790s indicate a large decline in the numbers of servants, and, especially, in the numbers of male servants (always the most migratory of the *resident* servants), while the overall population level stagnates or rises slowly (see Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, and 3.8). These changes are not, however, indicative of any change in the relations of production. Rather they are the normal pattern which marked periods of warfare. As during the War of the Grand Alliance, while the price paid for dried cod was high, so too were the costs of supply and of wages. As a result of these increased costs the number of servants coming to Newfoundland decreased. It would also seem that the size of the average fishing operation decreased (Matthews 1968;469) both because of the high cost of hired labour and because the high price of cod encouraged merchants to obtain greater supplies of fish by financing the expansion in the numbers of production units, the new boat keepers coming inevitably from the ranks of the servants. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the

influx of population, mostly servants, the population profile returns to the pattern of the first quarter of the eighteenth century; servants made up roughly 60 to 70 per cent of the population (though the sexual imbalance was gradually being eliminated with the increase in female servants) and masters roughly 20 per cent.

II. The Rise of the Seal and Labrador Fisheries; 1760 to 1840.

The later rise in population around Conception Bay, relative to other areas of the island, was due to the fact that the easiest initial avenue of expansion in the cod fishery was through geographical expansion, especially northwards, through an increase in the number of fishing production units. This was especially so in areas, such as St. John's and Conception Bay, where the exploitation of the resource base was expanding towards, if not the point of overexploitation (Head 1976 221-23), then at least of a diminishing return on fishing effort. In fact, many of the settlers on the new areas of the north shore of Newfoundland came from Conception Bay, and this continued to be the case through the nineteenth century. After 1750, the rise first of banking and, afterwards, of the Northern fisheries and, later still, of the spring seal fishery, was partially a response to and partially a cause of a rapidly rising population and its having outgrown the limited fishing resources available in Conception Bay (Head 1976, 56, 145, 221-22: Ryan 1971, 42-44).

The initial extension of the resource base exploited by the residents of Conception Bay seems to have been to the banks fishery. The banking fleet

expanded enormously after 1748 for Newfoundland as a whole (Matthews 1968:384-85) and a banking fleet operated out of Conception Bay, at least, up to 1771, though it seems to have disappeared sometime after that date (Head 1976;166-67).[2] The banking fleet probably died out due to the effects of the American Revolution, in particular the decreased availability of servants and the increased costs of labour.

A. The Labrador Fishery.

From at least the 1760's, during periods of war with the French, ships from Conception Bay fished during the summer in the area north and west of Cape Bonavista, on the area known as the French Shore (Head 1976, 223).[3] During periods of peace, however, the French Shore was closed to English and Newfoundland fishermen and, at least, some of the fishermen who had been using this area shifted their efforts to Labrador, which was annexed to Newfoundland in 1763 (Innis 1954:193, 308). Britain initially attempted to establish a British and purely migratory fishery at Labrador, but Governor Palliser's attempt to implement this policy and, especially, his attempt to outlaw property (i.e. fishing rooms) at Labrador were opposed by both settlers and merchants (Davies

[2] The novelty of larger decked vessels in the 1790s seems to indicate that the larger vessels, as would be needed in the banks fishery, had disappeared in the 1770s.

[3] The French Shore was the area given over to France, in a number of treaties with the English, for her inshore fishery. It originally covered all of the west coast of Newfoundland and the north coast west of Cape Bonavista. The area involved changed over time though it continued until the beginning of the twentieth century.

1980:164-6 and Matthews 1968:401-3).

The first record of Newfoundland fishers operating at the Labrador is from 1768. It reported that there were six fishing ships from Britain and 17 from Newfoundland on the coast of Labrador and that there were 24 British fishing boats and 130 from Newfoundland there (C.O. 194.18:40). The higher ratio of Newfoundland boats to fishing ships than of British boats to ships (eight to one vs. four to one) suggests that the Newfoundland ships were already carrying passengers (i.e. *stationers*, see below) to Labrador from Newfoundland, especially as the Newfoundland ships were probably smaller than those coming from England and were, therefore, unlikely to have more than two or three fishing boats of their own each. A few years later, in the "Account of the fishery, 1772-1773" (C.O. 199.17:24-122), it is reported that:

> Stages are Built for the Cod Fishery at Cape Charles, Henley Harbour, Temple Bay and St. Modeste, but there are no Fish dried and cured for a Foreign Market but at the two latter.... All the other Fish that are caught are carried to Newfoundland and dried there.

The fish which was brought back to Newfoundland to be dried were most likely fish taken by Newfoundland fishers.

Reports from the 1760s and 1770s strongly suggest that the pattern of the Labrador fishery in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth was set at the end of the eighteenth century. As Ryan (1971) has emphasised, in the nineteenth century the migratory Labrador fishery was closely tied to the spring seal fishery. However, as the above reports show, the origin of the Labrador cod fishery predates that of the spring seal fishery, which did not begin until the late

1790s.

In a court case from 1820 there is a description of a fairly large Labrador fishing operation, as carried on by a planter:

> The defendant is also the owner of a schooner fitted out about the 1st of June for the Labrador fishery, which is carried on upon that coast by open boats or skiffs. On board this schooner are embarked six men, three of whom are hired on wages for the season, say from 20th of May until the last of October; and three on shares for the same period of time. One of such servants takes charge of the schooner, as master, to navigate her to the Labrador, and carry supplies and fishing crews to a certain place, where, on the vessel's arrival, she is moored in safety, and laid up, unused, for a time, except as an occasional store for salt, etc.
>
> The master and men are then employed in skiffs, or open boats, catching fish, which they carry on shore to defendant's room, to be cured by a shore crew of the defendant's. As soon as enough fish is caught and cured to load the schooner, a sufficient crew from the men so hired and on shares, is put on board to navigate the vessel to St. John's; from whence, after delivering her fish there, she again returns to the Labrador, and remains until the end of the season, and then brings the residue of the fish and oil, the produce of the voyage, to St. John's, together with the fishing and shore crews, returning about the middle of October.
>
> But besides the aforesaid men, the hired servants of the defendant, the said vessel carried also to the Labrador ten other fishermen (besides defendant's shore crew, who were employed solely in curing the fish ashore); and which fishermen were supplied by defendant, who also contracted to cure on his room the fish they caught, and freight it to St. John's. On the vessel's arrival at the Labrador, these men, forming three separate crews, employed themselves in their own skiffs, or open boats, catching fish on their own account; and, as they caught it, daily delivered it on shore upon defendant's room to be cured. When cured, defendant's said schooner carried the fish on freight to St. John's; and out of it took the value of his supplies furnished to the catchers, together with the price of curing and the amount of freight; and delivered the surplus to the said fish-catchers to sell where they pleased, or purchased the same from them at current price (Decisions of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland: 1817-1828 1901:463-64).

The specifics of the fishing operation given in this description, for example that

the planter cured the fish which the crews he freighted to Labrador caught, were not universal in the Labrador fishery. Governor Gower describes the Labrador fishery as being operated much as the inshore fishery, with women and children curing the fish on shore (quoted in Head 1976:221-23), and various forms of production doubtless existed at this time, just as they did in the twentieth century. It is clear, nonetheless, that the basic division in the Labrador fishery, between floaters and stationers, was already well established by 1820 (Ryan 1971:45-51).

The division of the Labrador cod fishery, i.e. between *floaters and stationers,* was based on the technologies which each employed, mostly in the curing of their catch, though the names themselves refer to where and how they lived and cured their fish while at Labrador (which in the case of the floaters limited them to curing their heavy salted fish at home in Newfoundland). The technologies employed in the catching of fish were the same for both groups.

The term *stationer* indicated that the fishing operation was carried out from a permanent, though not necessarily very substantial, shore establishment called a *room.* A stationer's room on the Labrador would include, at minimum, a bunk and cookhouse, a stage for processing fish, and a made or natural *bawn,* for drying fish. A more substantial stationer's establishment might include a separate bunkhouse, summer house for the skipper, cookhouse, salt store, and an attached store selling fishing and general supplies, and a bawn.[4] Stationers either owned

[4] In this case one would be dealing with an establishment at least very near that of a merchant. However, as will be seen below, the line between merchant and substantial fisherman was not a particularly sharp one.

their own schooners or they made their way to Labrador each summer by taking passage on the vessel of another planter or merchant.

The term *floater*, on the other hand, indicated that the fishing operation was carried on from a schooner of between, on average, thirty to 100 tons. The crew lived on the schooner for the whole summer's fishing *voyage* and processed and stored their catch there before taking the fish home to Newfoundland to be dried in the fall. The floater's schooner served as a floating cookhouse, bunkhouse, and stage which, while it could sail from one area to another, stayed anchored close to shore while the actual fishing operations were in progress and could easily spend the whole summer in the same anchorage. In the first half of the nineteenth century floaters came from many areas on the northern coast of Newfoundland. The stationers, it would seem, came mostly from around Conception Bay.

Before the introduction of the cod trap, in the 1870s, handlining seems to have been the most important method of catching fish on the Labrador, though seines were also used (see Smith 1936:13,15-17,25). Floaters split and salted their fish on board their schooners and kept it in salt bulk, also known as *greenfish*,[5] ie. salted but not dried, until they returned to Newfoundland, where it was either sold as such or dried and then sold. The stationers, however, generally dried their fish at Labrador, and in this period it was usually brought back to

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[5] The alternate name used, at least by the fishermen from around Conception Bay, for floaters was *greenfish catchers*.

Newfoundland and shipped from there, though later in the nineteenth century it was often shipped directly from Labrador to the foreign markets.

Conception Bay was the centre of the Labrador fishery from the inception of the fishery and remained so at least until the mid-point to the nineteenth century. The social and economic character of Conception Bay during the 1780s (note that this is previous to the rise of the spring seal fishery from Conception Bay) is at least hinted at by Reeves:

> Observation arose the number of Adventurers who have of late Years come into the Trade, and who are so much censured by the Western Merchants for following the Example they had set. These new Comers have mostly resorted to St. John's, and to Conception Bay, where there is more Population, and where People are less united, and more at Liberty to engage with any new Merchants that present themselves. In Trinity Bay and Placentia Bay, I believe these new Adventurers make very little Impression.
>
> [I]n Trinity Bay, for example ... the Merchants there are few; every One knows his own Dependents; their own Boatkeepers and Servants must, at any Rate, be maintained by the respective Merchants,.... Thus in small Society private Interest becomes a public Virtue. But it is very different in Conception Bay, and at St. John's, where the Population is larger, and there is less Dependence and Connection between Merchants, Boatkeepers, and Servants. (1793, 87, 01 see also Head 1976:221-23, Innis 1954:303-5, and Matthews 1968:487).

The picture of Conception Bay as an area in which there was sharp competition between established local merchant firms, *partial adventurers,* and large merchant firms in St. John's, which put the local planters in a strong position *vis à vis* the merchants, is also drawn by Jukes for the period after the close of the Napoleonic Wars:

> The close of the war and consequent fall of the price of fish led to the breaking up of the large mercantile establishments, others failed from

> various circumstances, the increasing and more stable population drew people with smaller capital to set up stores in a smaller way and opened the door to competition, and the larger houses concentrated their business in St. John's, or a few of the principal places and supplied to merchants in the outports, or any persons who would pay for their goods either in cash, fish or oil. Lastly the number of small peddling schooners trading along the coast, frequently stepping in between the merchant and his planter, and buying the fish from under his nose as it were, acting in concert with the other courses, gradually broke up the old system while political and religious differences completed the alienation between the fisberman and the merchant. The fisherman [in the Avalon peninsula] may carry his fish to any one he chooses and though he cannot fix the price at which it shall be sold, as the merchants fix that by common consent from the state of the foreign markets[6] he has still the great benefit of competition in the choice of the provisions and goods he is to buy. (Jukes 1842:234-5)

The spring seal fishery, which was in full operation during the period of the previous description, further added to the independence of the planters around Conception Bay.

B. The Spring Seal Fishery.

Originally the commercial seal fishery was no more than a supplement to the summer cod fishery undertaken by the residents of Newfoundland during that time of the year when the cod fishery was not possible.[7] In 1722 it is reported:

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[6] "In Conception Bay, the custom not many years ago was this: The merchants and Planters met according to public notice to fix the price of fish and goods. If they could not agree, each party named six of their own body, who were to meet in the same manner, and if these could not agree, the matter was referred to the Governor whose decision was final. Since my coming here the Custom has been to hold a public meeting, at the Court house, of the merchants agents and Planters for the same purpose but I always found that the Planters came away dissatisfied, and I know now the reason of it.... Most of them hitherto have been kept considerably in Debt, and the dread of a writ and of a consequent forfeiture of fishing room, &c. had of course a powerful effect to induce them to compliance." (Anspach 1810:n.p.) After about 1815 the current price seems to have been set entirely by the Board of Trade in St. John's.

[7] In Labrador, however, the seal fishery was the primary industry in the eighteenth century while the cod fishery was supplementary to it (Gosling 1910:131-32,380).

> To this the Admirals Answer that after the fishing Season is over the Inhabitants employ themselves and Servants in cutting fewell and Timber for building shipps Boats Stages Houses and other Necessarys, as also in catching Furs, and killing Seals and making Oyle of their ffatts. (C.O. 194.7:106.)

A shore seal fishery, using nets attached to headlands, catching seals in their annual migrations, in the early summer and fall, along the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador, had existed since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century (Chafe 1924:8,15; Head 1976:223-26; Gosling 1910:131-32,380). Seals were also taken when the pack ice reached shore in the spring. While this was a regular occurrence north of Cape Bonavista, it was less common around Conception Bay. Conception Bay was far less important in the seal fishery prior to 1790 than was the area north of Cape Bonavista. While there was an increase in the seal fishery starting circa 1770 (Head 1976:76-7), Conception Bay was not involved until new methods of catching seals were developed.

The development of these new methods and the rise of the spring seal fishery around Conception Bay can be quite precisely dated using the records of the seal harvests from the eighteenth century. In Table 11 it can be seen that prior to the year 1796 the seal harvests, while quite variable from year to year, were generally at a level well below that of from 1796 onwards (with the single exception of the year 1741, when, presumably, the seal herds were pushed, along with the ice, right unto the shores of Conception Bay). With the year 1796 the recorded value of the seals caught rises dramatically, as do, when they begin to be recorded, the number of seals, vessels employed, and men employed (see Tables 12 and 13). It is clear that it is quite precisely at this date that there developed a

deep-sea seal fishery. According to Chafe (1924:21), two small schooners left from St. John's in 1795 for the seal fishery and in 1796 four left from St. John's and several also went from Conception Bay. In April of 1797 Rev. William Thorsby, a Methodist missionary, reports that the spring seal fishery is being carried on from Brigus (quoted in Lench 1925:3).

At first small, open shallops were employed while shortly after that larger, decked schooners, were introduced, allowing longer and larger trips out to the seal herds which were located on the offshore ice pack, the *front*. The rapid growth and technical change in this fishery is highlighted in the report, from 1798, of the voyage of the schooner *Active* of 40 tons, Wm. Munden master, which brought in 7,500 seals to Brigus (reported in Chafe 1924:39). It was this offshore seal fishery which served as the starting point for the growth of the Conception Bay seal fishery. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Conception Bay came to dominate the island's seal fishery and by the 1820s the seal fishery had probably become the chief industry of the major Conception Bay communities. Anspach (1849), writing about the first decade of the nineteenth century gives the following description of the seal fishery from Conception Bay:

> About Saint Patrick's day, or the 17th of the month of March, they proceed to that fishery through the most hoisterous weather, struggling by all possible means to get out of their harbour and bay. After having, at last conquered these first difficulties and proceeded beyond Baccalao Island, their next object is to reach a seal-meadow by sail or cutting through the intermediate fields of ice; they then run their vessel into it, the crew disperse, and whilst the gunners fire at the largest seals, the others assail the rest with clubs.... When sufficient execution has been made on a seal-meadow, or the extreme severity of the weather interrupts the operations, the dead seals are dragged on the ice to the schooner or boat; they are then *pelted*, that is, the skin with the coat of

> fat adhering to it is separated from the carcass, and the latter is thrown overboard, excepting such small portion as may be reserved for the mess. The voyage is continued through the ice, or through the open sea if it happens to be so, to other seal-meadows until the loading is completed, unless the state of the weather, or some material damage in the vessel makes it necessary to return sooner into port. They will, in general, make one trip within from four to six weeks, and when the ice and seals are abundant on the coast, they make two trips before the latter end of May, each trip averaging from nine to twelve pounds sterling per man.
>
> The usual mode in which the planters dispose of the produce of their voyage to the merchants, and by which the amount of each man's share is regulated, is either according to a price previously agreed upon, or settled before the return of the vessels from the first trip, or the the highest bidder; it is either so much per seal, tal. qual., or according to their size, in which case they are divided into three different sorts.
>
> When the seals have been landed, the fat is separated from the skin, and cut up into small pieces, which are put into puncheons or into vats, and there left to melt by the beat of the sun and weather.
>
> After all the oil that could be extracted by this process has been obtained, the *blubber*... is boiled over a large fire in copper cauldrons. This last operation... produces the blubber or common seal-oil of an inferior quality. It is said to have been first introduced not many years ago at Harbour Grace, and to have been productive of considerable profits to those merchants who first adopted it, by the facility of purchasing, at a very low price, the blubber which before was considered as of little value (422-25).

With the end of the Napoleonic Wars the economic life of Conception Bay was dominated by the summer Labrador cod fishery combined with the spring seal fishery. The two fisheries complemented each other both in the major tools they utilized, in particular the schooners, and in the relations of production under which they operated.

III. The Class Structure and Relations of Production.

The relations of production which dominated the social formation of Brigus and the other major centres around Conception Bay during the nineteenth century were essentially and overtly capitalist.[8] The class structure of Brigus and the other major centres around Conception Bay during the nineteenth century was dominated by three major groups forming two classes. Merchants and planters formed the two major types of capitalists while the fishing servants formed a proletarian working class. These three groups dominated the relations of production in nineteenth century Conception Bay just as they had dominated the class structure of the resident fishery in the eighteenth century.

A. The Merchants.

There were two types of merchants with whom the planters and fishing servants dealt with. These were outport merchants (originally mostly firms from the West Country of England) or those merchants operating at St. John's. Most firms based in the outports, and some of those based in St. John's, operated by supplying planters directly and, in the case of the Westcountry firms, were often run by agents appointed by the English owners (Ryan 1971:81-83). The

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[8] "Capitalism is a specific mode of commodity production in which the distribution of means of production are concentrated in the hands of capitalists. They buy means of production and wage goods from each other and labor power from laborers. Laborers are dependent on capital for wages with which to purchase their subsistence. The surplus created by producers—the value of commodities they produce beyond the value [or, better, the cost] of their labor power—is appropriated by capital by virtue of their monopoly over the means of production." (E. Antler 1981:51).

Westcountry English firms were steadily being replaced by Newfoundland firms after 1815. These merchants were essentially buyers and exporters of fish, who attempted to secure supplies of fish through supplying fishers and attempting to make sure that all of the catch would be delivered to them by manipulating prices for fish and/or supplies. During the American Revolution and the wars with France which followed the last of the migratory Westcountry merchant firms moved their operations to Newfoundland, and many new firms entered the trade in response to the high prices for dried cod which accompanied the period of warfare, especially around Conception Bay:

> Observation arose the number of Adventurers who have of late Years come into the Trade, and who are so much censured by the Western Merchants for following the Example they had set. These new Comers have mostly resorted to St. John's, and to Conception Bay, where there is more Population, and where People are less united, and more at Liberty to engage with any new Merchants that present themselves. In Trinity Bay and Placentia Bay, I believe these new Adventurers make very little Impression (Reeves 1793:86-7, see also Matthews 1968:525; Ryan 1971:78-83).

In periods of high prices the outport merchants tended to extend credit generously, in an attempt, often only partially successful, to preempt itinerant traders and with the intention of securing profits on the sale of dried cod. In periods of low prices, when there would be little competition for dried cod, credit would be limited and profits were taken from supplies.

The most important aspect of the economic relations which existed between merchants and planters was the tradition and law of *current supply*. The law of *current supply* held that the regular supplier of equipment necessary for a fishing

voyage had a right, in particular a maritime lien, to the production of the season's fishery up to the value of the supplies advanced, and, in the case of the distribution of insolvent estates the same principle applied (see Decisions..... 1817-1828 1901:154-57). The law of *current supply* insured, in so far as it worked, that the merchant had security for the supplies he had advanced to the planter. This is highlighted in a case brought before the Supreme Court of Newfoundland in 1819:

> This is a question of the greatest consequence to the trade and fisheries of this island, as at present conducted; for it is well known that they are, for the most part, carried on by means of necessaries furnished at the commencement of the fishing season to persons who are seldom possessed of any capital of their own, upon the faith of receiving the proceens [sic] of the voyage in payment for the supplies. It is a system of credit founded in good faith; and it becomes the duty of the Court to cement this necessary confidence hetween the parties, and to guard it with vigilance from infraction by others.
>
> But the same reasoning does not apply to the outharbors; they are unusual places of sale; and from their being so, the purchaser takes upon himself the risk of receiving fish in which another has a property, and, consequently, of refunding. He may buy fish at an outharbor, but he must buy it subject to all existing liens (Decisions.... 1817-28 1901:154-57).

If a planter was in debt to such an extent that his returns on a voyage would never put him out of debt, then, in a situation of no competition, he could sink to the level of a labourer. But that situation did not apply around Conception Bay. Current supply served to protect any merchant supplying a planter he had not supplied in the past, as the merchant knew that he, as current supplier, would be paid for his supplies before any previous seasons' suppliers would be. Conversely, this made it easier for a planter to get supplies from a merchant with

whom he had not previously dealt and so increased competition among merchants.

During periods of poor markets for cod, the merchant firms of Conception Bay seem to have attempted, illegally, to impose payments, especially of servants' wages, in truck, but this seems to have been opposed by the workers and, to a lesser extent, planters of Conception Bay (see Little 1984:156-72). Truck, in any case, was difficult to impose in the highly competitive markets of Conception Bay and in the presence of large numbers of independent planters, many of whom went, or at least could go, to St. John's for their supplies.

Because of the inevitable losses on a portion of supplies given out on credit, prices for goods supplied by the outport merchants, operating as general suppliers to the trade, were almost always higher (or prices paid for dried cod were lower, which amounted to the same thing) than those offered by itinerant merchants (*partial adventurers*) or at St. John's. As a result of this, outport merchants tended to give a disproportionate part of their supplies to the smaller and less successful planters while the more successful planters, i.e. independent planters, who obtained their supplies in more competitive markets, often did so in St. John's. This method of operation might work in an isolated community:

> But this Motive, such as it is, operates only in certain Parts of the Island; in Trinity Bay, for example, it may operate, both with regard to Boatkeepers and Servants ... and for this Reason; the Merchants there are few; every One knows his own Dependents; their own Boatkeepers and Servants .... Thus in small Society private Interest becomes a public Virtue. But it is very different in Conception Bay, and at St. John's, where the Population is larger, and there is less Dependence and Connection between Merchants, Boatkeepers, and Servants (Reeves 1793:88-91).

In the more populous areas, such as Conception Bay, however, the competition in sale of supplies, both within the Conception Bay area and with St. John's, meant that:

> The fisherman [in the Avalon peninsula] may carry his fish to any one he chooses and though he cannot fix the price at which it shall be sold, as the merchants fix that [i.e. *current price*] by common consent from the state of the foreign markets he has still the great benefit of competition in the choice of the provisions and goods he is to buy (Jukes 1842:235).

The smaller firms operating around Conception Bay, at least in the Labrador fishery, seemingly in an attempt to compete with the St. John's firms, began in this period to make *current price* the general or best price paid by the St. John's and large Harbour Grace and Carbonear firms in their dealings with independent planters:

> I [James Rorke Sen.] am senior partner in the firm of James Rorke & Sons. Been doing business at Labrador for at least three generations. Personally I have had 52 years experience. Was engaged in the business last year - 1914.
>
> When first I went into the business there never was any question of the price of fish until the planters came home and began to settle up, then the price was settled by the large exporters of fish such as Ridley, Munn, Donnelly, Baine Johnston, Duder, Job.[9] (The Mail and Advocate July 10, 1915)

From 1815 to the 1840s and especially in the 1830s the outport firms suffered from direct competition with the St. John's firms or from independent planters, operating as dealers for the St. John's firms, supplying locally. All of the five

[9] The first two of these firms are Harbour Grace firms while the others are from St. John's.

major firms reported to be the chief suppliers of Conception Bay in 1785, in *The principal fishing settlements at Newfoundland,* (Board of Trade 6, 87:84-86), had disappeared by the 1840s, having either gone bankrupt or moved out of the district (see also Ryan 1971:83). The large firms which remained around Conception Bay, in Harbour Grace and Carbonear, did so on the basis of the expansion of the seal and Labrador fisheries of the late 1830's (Ryan 1971:75-76) and operated, as merchants, much as did those in St. John's did, though they were also involved directly in production in the cod and seal fisheries.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars brought a fall in the price of fish and many of the large mercantile establishments failed. Many of the remaining larger firms concentrated their business in St. John's, or in the larger centres such as Harbour Grace and Carbonear. They generally supplied small, outport merchants, itinerant traders (*hucksters*), and planters (both *bona fide* for the fishery and as dealers, i.e. for resupply at the local level) or, " any persons who would pay for their goods either in cash, fish or oil" (Jukes 1842:235), rather than directly supplying fishers in the outports (Ryan 1971:78-83). During the period from the 1770s to 1815 St. John's had become "the Emporium of the Island and changed its character from a fishery to a considerable commercial town." (C.O. 194:55:95-115). Now the centre of trade and commerce for the island, St. John's firms began a period of intense competition with the remaining, large outport firms which was to last through to the end of the nineteenth century.

Around this time the St. John's merchants began to meet in August, either formally or informally, to set the *current price* to be paid for fish and oil in light

of what they thought the markets might be by the time the fish arrived later that fall and winter.

The St. John's merchants were, essentially, sellers of supplies, and cod or seal oil was the currency in which they generally had to deal. While it might seem to make little difference whether a merchant took his profit from the goods he supplied to a planter or from the fish and oil he took in payment for those supplies, especially as the account would be balanced after both transactions had been completed, it did make a difference in the context of the St. John's market. St. John's operated essentially as a market *ouverte*.

> In this town [i.e. St. John's], to which a great number of independent planters and others resort, for the purpose of selling their produce and buying provisions, it would be going too far to say, that the *bona fide* purchaser of fish would be liable to refund.
>
> In some cases he has been called upon so to do by the sessions, for servants' wages; but that was contrary to the opinion of this Court, which, by analogy to legal usage at home, regards this town as a market overt, an open and customary place of sale; in which it would be impossible to trace the private history of every boat-load of fish which may come to market; and the publicity of sale should protect the fair purchaser (Decisions.... 1817-28 1901:154-57).

While in theory the relations the merchants of St. John's had with the planters whom they supplied were based on the tradition and law of current supply, in reality the law of current supply was not enforceable there. In St. John's competition existed between the different merchant houses and certain *cash houses* (i.e. businesses that did not deal in fish) in prices of supplies (see Jukes 1842:234-5). The St. John's merchant houses attempted, not always successfully, to eliminate or, at least, limit competition in the buying of fish and current price served

this function. While credit was used by the merchant houses of St. John's in their supplying operations, it was not used as a method for securing a supply of cod, as did the outport merchants, and the St. John's merchants were willing, and in any case obliged, to take payment for supplies advanced on credit in cash or bills of exchange taken out on other merchant firms. In fact the St. John's merchants dealt with planters and outport merchants on pretty much the same basis, with the majority of both taking their supplies on credit at the beginning of the season and making payment in fish and oil or cash in the fall.

B. The Planters.[10]

The planters were, generally, small capitalists, though they were often the near equals of the outport merchants both in terms of status and in terms of the scale of their operations. They can be classified as capitalists because they owned, controlled, and had an effective monopoly over the means of production, bought the means of production and wage goods from each other (i.e. other capitalists, in particular from the merchants), and were dependent, overall as a class, on hired labourers (see E. Antler 1981:51).

The planters were often difficult to distinguish from merchants, as many, besides fishing, supplied other planters locally and the point at which they became primarily merchants rather than planters was usually difficult to

[10] As was outlined in Chapter 1, much of the detail in this and the following sections must be infered from interview material which actually concerns those types of relationships as they existed in the first part of the twentieth century, though the records of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland can serve to prove such inferences.

ascertain, especially as most merchants on the Labrador, also had at least one crew fishing directly for them (usually on wages, see Chapter 3).

The planters of Conception Bay were, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, clearly among the most prosperous in Newfoundland. The basis of the prosperity of the Conception Bay planters was the summer Labrador cod fishery and, especially for the larger scale planters, the spring seal fishery (though the planters' Labrador fishery continued after the Conception Bay seal fishery died out). The rapid growth of the Labrador fishery in the first decades of the nineteenth century clearly followed the growth in the seal fishery (see Table 13). With the boom in the seal fishery which took place from 1800 to 1850, planters were able to obtain credit from the merchant firms, probably the larger ones, in order to build and fit out sealing schooners, which could then be used in the summer Labrador cod fishery. The arrangement under which this took place is outlined in court cases from the years 1820 and 1851:

> It also appeared that a custom prevails in this country of advancing supplies to dealers [i.e. planters] to enable them to build vessels; that the vessels so built are held as securities [they were listed as being owned by the merchant advancing the capital], to be reassigned upon payment of the supplies; and that a reasonable time is allowed to the debtor to work out the debt and clear the vessel. (Decisions.... 1817-28 1901:215)

> It [the circumstance of the case] is one of common occurrence here, namely, the giving of a vessel [here a schooner] by a merchant to a planter, and furnishing him with *supplies* to enable him to clear her.... (Decisions.... 1846-1853 1915:197)

The seal fishery was profitable enough in that period that many planters were able to clear their debt with the merchant in a few years and so found themselves

the independent owner of a schooner and able to trade with whomsoever they wished (Matthews 1968:596).

The cod fishery at Labrador and on the French Shore was not as capital intensive as the spring seal fishery and many small planters who operated as such in the cod fishery served as labourers on the sealing vessels of the larger planters and merchants.

While some fishing units did not employ any hired labour and depended, instead, entirely on family labour, that type of fishing unit was not separable as a class or a mode of production, from the planter fishing units. Rather, they are best understood as either a personal strategy, a symptom of lack of success, or of fortuitous family growth, i.e. enough offspring of the right age willing to work as partners. So dominant were wage relations in the Brigus Labrador fishery that it was more often the case that, where a crew was made up of children of the planter along with hired servants (hired either on shares or for set wages, see below), those sons and daughters most often worked on exactly the same basis as servants did, i.e. for wages or shares, and alongside the regular servants.

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[10] Speaking about the early part of this century (see previous fn.) a former fisherman described the economic relations existing in his father's fishing crew:

> Anyhow all hands had to go on the same, we got together, and when we came out of it we never had a cent, not a copper. My father [the planter] didn't, well he was worse than me because I was on the shares then, see, and I had eighty dollars, that's not a month, that's, that's what I had, now, clear, we'll say, that's what I had to buy a bit of food for the winter....

C. The Fishing Servants.

The terminology used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for the fishing servants is generally far from clear. While the term *fishermen* is often used it is a very vague term, including at times planters or even some merchants. Probably the best term, and the general legal one, is *servants,* (see Decisions.... 1817-1828 1901:190-92; Decisions.... 1846-1853 1915:4-9,9-12,102-22; Decisions.... 1854-1864 1900:11-20; Decisions.... 1864-1874 1899:351-52; Decisions.... 1884-1896 1897:99-103; Decisions.... 1897-1903 1905:20-30 Decisions.... 1904-1911 1912:165-68), though at times, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the term *servant* is used to distinguish those working on set wages from those working on shares.

Among the fishing servants there were three forms of wage payments. These were, *set wages, shares,* and *shipped shares.* Set wages were a form of contract where both the quantity and the wage itself were guaranteed regardless of the success of the summer fishing voyage. Servants operating under this form of contract were referred to as *shipped men.* Sometimes a bonus was also paid to shipped men based on the quantity of fish caught. Shares were a form of contract where both the quantity and the wage itself was dependent on the success of the summer fishing voyage, those servants operating under this form of contract were referred to as *sharemen.* The share could be either a share of what the individual fishing servant caught (referred to as "being on the count"), if the crew was handlining, or of the combined catch of the whole crew, if they were using cod traps, seines, or handlining.[11] In the Labrador fishery the labourer's

[11] Trawls or longlines were rare on the Labrador.

share was always *half his hand*, i.e. a share of half of the fish caught (though, generally, if the planter laboured along with the crew one share of that half also went to him). Shipped shares were a hybrid system whereby a servant was on shares but guaranteed a minimum set wage regardless of the success of the voyage.

As in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and as was argued in Chapter 1) the existence or prevalence of wage contracts paid in a set wage or in shares does not seem to indicate any fundamental difference in the social or economic organization of the fishery. Both payments in set wages and in shares were simply different forms of wages and were recognized as such by the courts, "...shares, or the value of them represent wages...." (Decisions.... 1884-1896 1897:239-40; see also, Decisions.... 1817-1828 1901:463-64, Decisions:.., 1884-1896 1897: 99-103; Decisions.... 1904-1911 1912:165-68). Crews could be made up of servants on both forms of wages, and members could change from one form to the other at different points in the season and for different tasks. For example, Nicholas Smith (1936:20-21,27-28), while serving in the crew of a Labrador floater from Brigus, went on shares for the fishing voyage proper, but when they returned to Newfoundland and started coasting the crew switched to set wages of $12.00 a month.

For most of the nineteenth century *Shipped men*, i.e. those on set wages, seem to have been outnumbered by those servants working on shares for wages, though information about this is scanty. The only sections of the labouring population which were always and entirely made up of shipped servants were

among those working on the merchants' rooms (and hence involved extensively in activities not directly related to the fishery) and women; employed as specialist shorecrew (i.e. in curing the fish) or as cooks, working as part of the planters' and merchants' crews (regardless of the method of wage payment for the rest of the crew). Both these groups were similar in that they were not involved primarily in the complete production process, though in the first group this was a result of the nature of the work itself whereas in the second it was a result of the sexual division of labour. The only other group of fishing servants who commonly received set wages were some of those working for the larger merchant-planters. Probably because of the extra risk a planter took in hiring on a crew entirely on set wages, a shipped man seems to have received, on average, less than a sharemen would receive in an average year with average prices being received for dried cod. The wages of women working as cooks on the Labrador generally seem to have been lower than both the average wage of a shareman and the set wages of the shipped men as were the wages of women working as curers:

> I should suppose that the total number engaged in the Cod Fishery, from Cape Charles, Northward to Esquimaux Bay [Grosswater Bay], was about 6,500; of these a great number are women, wives and daughters of fishermen, and are employed to clean the fish, and also nominally to clean the vessels; they are engaged at small wages, and are said to do as much work as the men. (Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland v.5 n. 1, 1853: 128-9)

The shipped man generally went into *collar* (i.e. signed on and started working) at the beginning of May and went *out of collar* at the end of October. During that period the shipped man had to do whatever the planter demanded, whether or not it was connected with the fishing voyage. For example, he could be made

to work in the planter's garden, around his house, or (as the previous example from Smith illustrates) in the coasting trade, whereas a shareman was generally responsible only for tasks directly related to the fishing voyage.

During the period of the shipped man's employment, or at least while they were on the Labrador, the planter was responsible for their food and lodging and all other expenses except for the personal gear, often such items as would be included in the servant's *crop*,[12] ie. clothing and luxuries such as tobacco. The shipped man settled up at the end of October at which time they received their pay, minus the amount of their crop in cash, check, or goods.

The majority of those working in the Labrador fishery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did so for a share of the catch as wages rather than for set wages. While the wages of the Labrador *sharemen* could be, and on average probably were, higher than shipped men, they could, if the voyage was unsuccessful, get little or nothing. While shares were probably the more general method of payment, in individual cases the form of wages was dependent on a number of economic factors, both personal and in terms of general economic conditions. On the individual level the past success of the planter might be important, with servants less likely to accept shares from a planter whose past success in fishing had been poor or inconsistent. The level of risk a fishing servant was in the position to take might also determine the type of wage contract he would be willing to

[12] The *crop* for the summer fishery operated much like the sealing crop, note that like the sealing crop it need not necessarily have been taken in goods nor did a servant have to take crop.

accept, as shares were always a more risky form of payment than set wages, though often a more renumerative one. The experience of the fishing servant could also be a deciding factor, with a planter and, especially the crew, often being unwilling to give a full share to a very young or untried, new member.

In terms of the general economic conditions, for example, when the markets for dried cod were consistently poor and prices were low, then almost all of the planters would demand that payment be in shares. Set wages could amount to more than the value of the dried cod sold, whereas that was impossible with shares. Conversely, when there was a relative shortage or labour then the fishing servants were in a better position to demand either shares, wages, or, best of all, shipped shares.

The sharemen, like the shipped men, generally went into *collar* (i.e. signed on and started working) at the beginning of May and went *out of collar* at the end of October. However, during that period sharemen, unlike shipped men, were only expected to work at tasks directly related to the fishery. For example, sharemen were *not* expected to work on the planter's house or garden, whereas a shipped man could be. However, sharemen were expected to help repair the planter's fishing gear or schooner before going to the Labrador, as that was a task directly related to the fishery During the period they were on the Labrador, the planter was responsible for the sharemen's food and lodging as well as all other expenses except for the personal gear. Like the shipped men, the sharemen usually were cropped by the planter's supplying merchant. The sharemen settled up upon their return to Newfoundland in the fall and at that time they received

their pay, minus the amount of their crop, in cash, check, or goods.

D. Relations of Production: the Planter Fishery.

The classes outlined above and the relations of production within which they operated have been referred to as the *planter fishery*, and have been considered the dominant set of relations of production up through the first third of the nineteenth century. It has been argued (E. Antler 1081, and Sider 1986, both following S. Antler 1975) that the planter fishery and planters as a class disappeared in Newfoundland around 1840. S. Antler bases his arguments for this on a series of legal decisions, in particular on *Nowlan v. MacGrath* which took place in 1840, and on supposed demographic changes, gleaned from the Newfoundland censi, which took place between 1836 and 1845. While S. Antler (1975) is correct in recognizing the centrality of the related legal concepts of the fishermen's lien on the product of the voyage and the law of current supply (which he labels as the "wage system" and the "lien system", respectively, 1975:33-44) his characterization of those legal concepts is mistaken, as are his interpretations of the demographic data.

According to S. Antler (1975:55, see also E. Antler 1981:37-38) the "wage system" consisted of the obligation of the supplying merchant to guarantee the wages of the servants of a planter regardless of the success of a fishing season. As was outlined above, the fishing servants' lien meant that the fishing servants had first claim on the estate of an insolvent planter and further that, in regards to the production of the current season, they had the right to it even if it had

passed out of the hands of the planter (i.e. the fishermen's right to *follow the fish and the oil*). If, however, both of these sources failed to meet the fishing servants' wages then they were without their wages and did not have the legal right to look to the supplying merchant to pay them:

> The supplying merchant of a planter is liable to pay the wages to the servants of that planter *to the extent of the value of any fish and oil which may have come to his hands as the produce of the voyage*.... (my emphasis; Decisions.... 1817-1828 1901:190-92, see also, Decisions.... 1817-1828 1901:129-38 190-92 210-13, Decisions.... 1846-1853 1915:1-4:4-9:102-22).

S. Antler's characterization of current supply, his "lien system," is that under that system in taking supplies from a merchant on credit a planter became bound to deliver all of the production of that season's voyage to that same merchant, regardless of the relative value of supplies and production (S. Antler 1975:42-43, 59). As well, the merchant, besides having to guarantee the planter's servants' wages, could not make the planters' property, or at least their capital in the fishery (i.e. the boats, gear, etc.), liable for the planters' debts, (S. Antler 1975:54-62) and, further, that, "The planter's debt to the merchant... was extinguished when the season's catch was delivered to the merchant.", regardless of the amount of the debt, "... even though the planter's end-of-season balance [was] negative, his actual *debts* at the end of the season [were] zero" (S. Antler 1975:55).

In fact, *current supply* was a much more limited concept. In a court case from 1819 the concept and extent of current supply are outlined (as well as parts of the servants' lien):

The plaintiffs are merchant suppliers for the fishery, and advance necessaries to dealers at the outharbors of this island, for which they receive fish and oil in payment. They supplied, among others, Froud & Sons of Trinity Bay, last summer, to a considerable amount, but receiving from them little more than one-half of the value of their advances; and hearing that their fishery had been productive, they caused an enquiry into the cause, and learnt that they had put off part of the proceeds of their voyage to the supercargo of a certain schooner, which had been sent round by the defendant to Trinity Bay for the purpose of obtaining fish and other produce in exchange for provisions and goods.

It appeared in evidence, that the defendant was not a supplier of Froud & Sons; that he had sent a schooner to Trinity Bay in October last, and directed his supercargo in general terms, to barter goods for fish, who conceived he might deal with any person that offered; and under this impression, received thirty-five quintals of fish from Froud & Sons, without asking any questions about their suppliers, *or the state of their accounts,* [my emphasis] or supposing such inquiry necessary.

Under these circumstances, the plaintiffs brought this action for the recovery of the value of the fish received by the defendant, for which they contended he was liable, under the usage and law of the fishery. The defendant, on the other hand, maintained that he had a right to purchase from any person who was in possession of the commodity sold; and as he paid full value for the fish in question, he was entitled to retain it....

It is certainly the right of the owner of any goods to dispose of them in any way that he pleases; but the gist of the case before the Court is, who were the owners of the goods in question? and what is the force and extent of that lien upon the actual or supposed existence of which, the merchant who advances the means of prosecuting the fishery principally relies for his payment? This is a question of the greatest consequence to the trade and fisheries of this island, as at present conducted; for it is well known that they are, for the most part, carried on by means of necessaries furnished at the commencement of the fishing season to persons who are seldom possessed of any capital of their own, upon the faith of receiving the proceens [sic] of the voyage in payment for the supplies....

It has always been held that the regular supplier of necessaries for a fishing voyage has a specific interest in the fish caught, *to the value of his supplies* [my emphasis]. It is a local usage growing out of the course of conducting the fishery, and was probably adopted from the maritime law of lien upon a ship, for necessaries found and labour performed

> upon a foreign voyage.... In a more recent case it ws held, "that the supplier of necessaries, had a lien upon the fish *for the amount of his supplies:* that the 49th of the King was a directory application of the same principle to the distribution of insolvent estates; and that a judgement at law was subject to the preferable claim of current supplier." ...the purchaser takes upon himself the risk of receiving fish in which another has a property, and, consequently, of refunding. He may buy fish.... but he must buy it subject to all existing liens. (Decisions.... 1817-28 1901:154-57).

S. Antler's contentions that the planters' property, at least in the fishery, could not be made liable for their debts and that "The planter's debt to the merchant... was extinguished when the season's catch was delivered to the merchant.", regardless of the amount of the debt,(S. Antler 1975:55) are also both in error. In 1818, in the case of *Henry Simms v. Francis Hoddern*, exactly the opposite is found. A planter took out supplies for the fishery and, unable to pay his debt for this from the production of the voyage, had his vessel attached and sold to pay off the debt (Decisions..... 1817-1828. 1901).[13] In this case the planter's debt was not extinuished simply by delivering his catch, which could not cover the costs of his supplies, and, therefore, his property became liable for his debt.

Both the fishing servants' lien and current supply apply to and almost always arose in cases of insolvency, in particular the insolvency of planters. In fact, both laws are but sections of the general insolvency laws. Though it was the usage of the fishing business that fishing gear, boats, production, etc. could not be attached during the fishing season, in particular that fishermen were

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[13] It should be noted that the question at issue in this case was not whether the vessel could be attached, but rather it concerned the service of the writ to the defendent.

entitled to a stay of execution until the fall of the year (Decisions..... 1817-1828 1901:8), this was really quite an unimportant point exactly because the current supplier had no motive to make such attachment exactly because of the security provided by the law of current supply.

Though S. Antler's characterization of the legal formulations of the relations of production, i.e. the fishing servants' lien and current supply, are mistaken, his contention that they are essential to understanding the planters' fishery is correct. S. Antler argues further, however, that the planter fishery was destroyed in the period from 1835 to 1840 and that the most visible aspect, if not the immediate cause, of that destruction came in a series of court cases which took place during those years (S. Antler 1975:26-27 see also E. Antler 1081:39-40). According to the S. Antler, these court cases culminated in the Fall of 1840 in the case of *Nowlan v. MacGrath*. His interpretation of this case is that it overturned the fishermen's right to follow the fish and the oil, i.e. the fishing servants' lien on the produce of the voyage, (and presumably the fishing servants' preferable claim to the estate of an insolvent planter) and, hence, overturned the basis of the planters' fishery (S. Antler 1975:80-88). A careful reading of Nowlan v. MacGrath, however, indicates that this decision was made neither on the right of fishermen to follow the fish and the oil, nor on the preferential claim of fishing servants wages. The decision was actually made on the question of whether fishing servants had the right to disobey their master's orders so as to detain fish as security for their wages (which would be the necessary if a regular lien was to be enforced) (see Journal of the Legislative Council of Newfoundland vol. 2, n. 6,

1841: Appendix 39). The Court decided that they did not.

In fact this decision would seem to have indirectly upheld the right of the *fishermen to follow the fish and the oil.* If it had been determined in Nowlan v. MacGrath that the fishing servants did have the right to detain the fish and the oil then their right *to follow the fish and the oil,* a right which had always been justified to prevent exactly such detentions, would have been denied. This point was made clear in a case from 1819:

> If the servant is to lose his lien upon the removal of the fish from the planter's room, he must interpose legal process to arrest it; and the Court has had abundant experience of the ruinous consequences of such a proceeding.[14] (Decisions.... 1817-1828 1901:192)

Further proof that the case of Nowlan v. MacGrath did not overturn the fishing servants' lien on the produce of the voyage, and in fact did not deal directly with that point at all, is found in the numerous cases from after 1840 which explicitly upheld that lien and which make no mention of Nowlan v. MacGrath. In 1846 "Moreen v. Ridley et al," it is stated that:

> Fishery Servants have a right, which is not lien, but a statutory right to be paid their wages in full out of the proceeds of the "voyage" or season's fishing even when it has passed into the hands of the merchant supplying the "planter" with whom they shipped. (Decisions.... 1846-1853 1915:4)

In 1849 in "Hanrahan v. Barron and Doody", the servants' prior claim on wages is again upheld; this case is especially noteworthy as one of the Chief Justices

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[14] The "ruinous consequences" could be either that the fish would be held before it was cured, in which case it would rapidly rot, or that the fish would arrive late on the European markets and so obtain a much lower price than it would have had it arrived earlier.

sitting on the case had also sat on the case of Nowlan v. MacGrath and yet there is no reference made to that case at all (Decisions.... 1846-1853 1915:102-22).

The fishing servants' right to follow the *fish and the oil* was actually overturned by the courts in 1854 in the case "In re Fishery Servants of Patrick Cashman, insolvent debtor." in which the Court decided that there could be no "custom of the fishery prevailing in Newfoundland whereby fishery servants have the right to follow the produce of the voyage in the hands of the merchant" because there could be no laws based on custom in any of the North American colonies and because the statutory basis of that right (i.e. 15 Geo. III., cap. 31, sec 10,) had been repealed by 13 and 14 Vic., cap. 80 (Decisions.... 1854-1864 1900:11-20 1854).[15]

However, the legislative response to this legal decision is further evidence that the fishing servants' lien, and current supply, remained essential aspects of the relations of production in the Newfoundland fishery. First, it should be noted that this legal decision, taken in the Fall of 1854, would not have had general effect until the Fall of 1855, when the next season's wages became due. However, even in the Fall of 1855 there seems to have been no significant increases in the number of fishing servants' denied their wages due to the insolvency of their planter-employers.. The new Liberal government quickly introduced legislation to

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[15] It is again to be noted that there is *no* reference to Nowlan v. MacGrath in this case.

reinstate the fishing servants' right to *follow the fish and the oil*, and the first reading of a new insolvency bill, which included this was introduced by the new Liberal administration in January 1856 (JHA 1856:20). In the second reading of the bill the:

> Hon. Attorney General said .... the present state of the law left the fisherman without any positive or definite right to the payment of his wages....
>
> As the law stands at present, under the Judicature Act, the current supplying merchant is secured in twenty shillings in the pound, from the voyage of the Planter, in case of his insolvency, which Act also contains a proviso declaring the prior right of the fisherman to his wages; but that right is not defined, and the fisherman is therefore exposed to doubt and uncertainty.
>
> The necessity of an Act to protect the fisherman had been made manifest to him (the Attorney General) by cases which had come under his own knowledge during even the past fall, in which the merchant had received the voyage and refused to pay the wages. He was happy to say, that such cases were unfrequent [sic],.... (The Newfoundlander February 4, 1856)

While the Liberals seemed intent on using the issue in attacking the merchants and the merchants' party, the Tory members of the House of Assembly seemed to be quite dissinterested in the law and let it pass without any significant opposition. The only demand of the Tories was that the law of current supply be included in the new insolvency law, a point not opposed by the Liberals, and the Attorney General duly introduced such an amendment to the bill (The Newfoundlander February 21, 1856). The Insolvency Bill was passed without amendment in the more conservative Upper Chamber of the Legislature (The Public Ledger May 2, 1856) and the whole question seems to have been solved with a minimum of fuss. All court decisions after that date continued to

uphold the *fishermens' lien* and the *law of current supply* (see Decisions..;. 1864-1874 1899:351-52, Decisions.... 1884-1898 1897:99-103, Decisions.... 1897-1903 1905:20-30, and The Fishermen's Advocate 11/9/36:4 "The Insolvency Case of a Pouch Cove Fishermen".)

S. Antler also utilises population data found in nineteenth century Newfoundland censi, the most important of which comes from his comparison of the 1845 and 1857 censi (S. Antler 1975:92). It is the argument of this thesis that the statistical data presented by Antler are too tenuous for the theoretical weight they are expected to carry. Almost all of the population data which S. Antler uses rest on the difference in the numbers engaged in the different professions, in particular on the large increase in the numbers of persons listed as being involved in fishing, between the 1845 and 1857 censi (S. Antler 1975 02). S. Antler's argument is that the large increase in the numbers of "planters, fishermen, shoremen, etc.", from 18,503 in 1845 to 38,578 in 1857 (or to 63,582 in 1857 if "Ablebodied seamen engaged in trade and fishing" are included), within the context of a small increase in the overall population (from 96,295 in 1845 to 119,304 in 1857), and in the amount of dried cod produced, is evidence for a decrease in the size of the fishing production units, which is in turn evidence for an increase in the *household-based* fishery and a decrease in the, larger scale, planters' fishery.

There are too many problems with the censi to convincingly sustain this complex argument. For many communities found in the 1845 census, the numbers of people engaged in the different professions is simply left blank (see Newfoundland Census, 1845:7-8,15,26). More importantly, in this census, it

would seem that not all of the population was categorized by profession, whereas in 1857 all were. It would seem, therefore, that the difference may simply be due to differences in the instructions to the enumerators. The problems which arise in comparing the 1845 and 1857 censi are summarized in Figure 3.9. As can be seen from that figure, taking the minimum working age population (i,e. males between 14 and 70) almost one third of that section of the population was not enumerated by profession[16] in 1845 whereas in 1857 either women were being enumerated by profession[17] or professions were not being treated as exclusive characteristics. If it is assumed that those for whom no profession was given in the 1845 census had the same mix of professions as did the rest of the population then we find that those listed as "Planters, fishermen, shoremen, etc" (line C) increase by only 44 per cent between the 1845 and 1857 censi. If it is assumed, further, that the figure listed in line J under the 1857 censi represents the minimum number of women working in the fishery, and it is also assumed that women were not enumerated by profession in the 1847 census (examination of the census strongly suggests that this is the case), and we therefore subtract the figure in line J from line C, to get a comparable figure, then the per cent increase in line C is only 15, well below the per cent increase in the overall population. In any case, it seems clear that the two censi are not comparable, and cannot be

[16] Or they had no employment, which seems most unlikely in that period.

[17] There are no contemporary records which suggest that women were not actively engaged in the fishery before 1845 nor that they entered into it in any significantly increased numbers in the period 1845 to 1857.

used as S. Antler attempts to.

Another aspect of S. Antler's (1975:38-46) argument is that the shift in the payment of fishing servants' in set wages to payment in shares indicates a shift from the planter fishery to the household-based fishery. There is only scattered, anecdotal evidence to suggest that there was such a shift. In fact there is little evidence to suggest, as S. Antler insists, that the planter fishery was operated predominantly or even usually on wages rather than shares. In 1815 it is reported that of the residents of Conception Bay, "1/4th [are] on the Shares & half their fish when cured." while for the District of Trinity, "Amongst the planters almost wholly upon Shares; with the [two words illegible] by Servants. But the fishery of the planters is most extensive." For the other districts of the island it is reported that in Bay Bulls, Ferryland, Placentia, and Fortune Bay, 90 per cent or more are on shares and, significantly, that for Fogo, "for the last four years a number of servants have been employed on the Shares as Servants have become scarce." (C.O. 194.57:12 1815). In 1816 the figures are much the same except that it is stated that around Conception Bay, one half were on shares (C.O. 194.59:27 1816), which would suggest that the payment in shares was growing in the period which S. Antler claims to be the height of the planter fishery (1975:26-27:33:70-79).

In any case, the existence or prevalence of servants being paid on shares is not evidence of the end of the planter fishery. As will be discussed in further detail the Chapter 4, shares and set wages were simply different methods of paying servants and is not evidence of differing modes of production nor even of

different work organizations (except that the servants of merchants were almost always hired on fixed wages). S. Antler (1975:44-46) confuses crews with fishing servants working for shares, with fishing crews made up of equal partners, sharing all expenses and profits or losses (i.e. the work organization of the *family fishery*). While the former (payment in shares) is simply one form of payment of servants within a system of wage relations, the latter is something quite different and represents a quite separate organization of work. According to S. Antler (1975:44-46) this form of fishing operation was, "... organized *via* individual contract; that is, each fisherman [in a fishing crew] contracts with the merchant individually for supplies[18] at the start of the season, and settles up individually with the merchant at the end of the season." If such a form of fishing operation existed in the nineteenth or twentieth century Labrador fishery as carried out from Conception Bay, then it was uncommon.

Planters operated on set wages, on shares, on both systems, or on combinations of the two, such as *shipped shares* or wages with a bonus based on the production of the voyage (see above). In a court case from 1820 there is a description of such a combination of payment systems:

> On board this schooner are embarked six men, three of whom are hired on wages for the season, say from 20th of May until the last of October; and three on shares for the same period of time (Decisions ... 1817-1828 - 1901:463-64).

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[18] That is all the supplies necessary for carrying on the fishery, not just their personal supplies, i.e. their crop.

The courts, as well, recognized that; "shares, or the value of them represent wages...." (Decisions ... 1884-1896 1897:239-40, see also 99-103 and Decisions ... 1817-1828 1901:82-83, Decisions ... 1904-1911 1912:165-68) and that the fishing servants' lien and preferential claim for wages applied equally to fixed wages or to shares (Decisions ... 1884-1896 1897:99-103, Decisions ..., 1897-1903 1905:20-30)

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the persistence of the planter fishery, at least around Conception Bay, is the continued and common reference to planters up until, at least, the Second World War (Smith 1936, R. Bartlett 1928, R. Bartlett n.d., and newspapers from the period; The Mail and Advocate, The Fishermen's {later Evening} Advocate, The Guardian, The Newfoundlander, and The Public Ledger). In fact, the definition of planter given by my informants, whose recollections are mostly of the period following the First World War, fits that given for the early nineteenth century.

IV. Brigus, 1750-1815.

The only document which deals individually with Brigus and the other communities around Conception Bay in the second half and the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is the *Return of Possessions in Conception Bay (1702-1807)* (see Table 14 and Figures 3.10 to 3.15), which is a listing and a description of landed properties held in Newfoundland. While not a census of the population it does give a view of the individual communities in Newfoundland in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

It is not known if the population of Brigus started to grow in the decade of

1750 along with the rest of Conception Bay. The activities of the planters in Brigus are not directly documented for the second half of the eighteenth century. It does seem, however, that around 1750 there were from five to ten planters in Brigus (see Figures 3.10 and 3.11 and Table 14). This figure shows little if any growth from the population of the community in the first two decades of the eighteenth century (see Figures 1.17 and 1.18). There is also no direct evidence that the planters of Brigus were involved in the initial growth in, first, the banking and then the Northern fisheries, but the number of planters in Brigus seems to have more than doubled between 1750 and the decade of 1770 to 1780, with an estimated five to ten plantations in 1750 to close to 30 in 1780 (see Figures 3.10 and 3.11). This strongly suggests that they were so involved. Further indirect evidence of Brigus's involvement in, at least, the Northern fishery can be found in the rapid growth of the spring seal fishery in the 1790s, which would seem to have been unlikely if the planters in Brigus had not been involved in some distant water fishing effort before then.

The number of family names also increased in this period from the six or seven found there in the 1750s, to more than twenty found there in the 1770-1780 period. This suggests that the population increase was due to immigration as well as to natural increase (see Table 15 and Figure 3.11).

Merchant involvement in Brigus in the second half of the eighteenth century is better documented than that of the planters. H. Bartlett (1940) claims that the firm of Gundryas of Bridgeport, England, sent out Azariah Munden, in 1760, as their agent. While there are no further records of this firm in Brigus, in 1770

"Azariah Mundon" owned a plantation comprised of a stage, three flakes, three houses, three gardens, and a meadow. In the nineteenth century the Mundens were prominent residents of Brigus and important figures in the seal fishery. George Kemp of Poole entered the Newfoundland trade, along with many others, in the 1780s (Matthews 1968:525) and Geo. and James Kemp & Co. leased land from Steph. Percey, for 49 years at an annual rent of six pounds, from the year 1797, and was the largest merchant establishment in Brigus in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

While most aspects of the history of Brigus in the eighteenth century are difficult to ascertain, it is clear that Brigus was involved in the spring seal fishery from the very beginnings of that industry. On April 4th, 1797, at the very beginnings of the spring seal fishery (see above), the Methodist missionary William Thorsby, reporting on his visit to Brigus, says, "I preached to a serious and well behaved audience but at present they are busily engaged preparing for the sealfishery." (quoted in Lench 1925:3). If, as Chafe (1924:21) claims, in 1796 several vessels left for the spring seal fishery from Conception Bay, then it would seem likely that at least some of those vessels were from Brigus. In the year 1798 William Munden, master of the 40 ton schooner *Active*, brought 7,500 seals in to Brigus (Chafe 1924:39). In 1819 the same William Munden had the schooner *Four Brothers*, 104 tons, built for him in Brigus, which was the first vessel over 100 tons used in the sealfishery (ibid). By the second decade of the nineteenth century the spring seal fishery was probably the dominant economic activity in Brigus. Edward Kemp, agent for Geo. and James Kemp & Co. at Brigus, writing

in February 1817, makes this clear, "With [the departure of] the sealing schooners, the chief strength of the harbour will go from us..." (C.O. 194.60:294 1817:294).

It seems clear that the spring seal fishery was the economic basis for the growth in Brigus in the nineteenth century. The social and economic character of Brigus, relatively prosperous and independent planters and considerable competition among merchants, was probably one of the most important prerequisites for the rise of the Spring seal and Labrador fisheries. Brigus shared these characteristics with a number of other communities of similar size around Conception Bay, eg. Port-de-Grave, Cupids, and Bay Roberts. The reason that Brigus, rather than any of these neighboring Conception Bay communities with similar social and economic characteristics, became so prominent so early in the seal fishery is probably due to the fact that in Brigus harbour the winter ice tends to clear out quickly in the spring, which allowed the sealing ships to leave for the front with less difficulty and earlier than from these other communities.

The picture of Brigus given in the *Return of Possessions in Conception Bay (1702-1807)* (C.O. 199.17:26-9, see Figure 3.12) is of community which had grown considerably from that of a century before.

There are an average of seven persons per house (including public houses) in Conception Bay for the first decade of the nineteenth century. If it is assumed that this ratio also applied to Brigus at this time then its population would be about 650 persons in the winter and up to that number of additional servants employed in the summer. But if the number of property owners, partnerships,

etc. (assumed to be about the same as the number of masters) is multiplied by the average ratio of masters to the rest of the population for the first decade of the eighteenth century (from Table 6), then a much smaller figure is arrived at (260). The permanent population of Brigus would probably have been in the neighborhood of five to six hundred people.

The difference between these two figures can probably be explained by the larger production units employed by the Brigus planters. The average number of persons per house in Conception Bay is an average for the whole of Conception Bay, parts of which came from areas where the inshore fishery (involving smaller production units) was more prominent than in Brigus. As Brigus was heavily involved in the seal fishery (which involved larger scale production units) the size of the production unit which the average planter in Brigus operated was significantly larger than that for Conception Bay as a whole, though the production unit may have been similar in size to that found in the communities of Carbonear and Harbour Grace. The large number of planters who own more than one house suggests that they each employed a number of servants on a year round basis, and is further evidence that the planters of Brigus had larger scale fishing and sealing operations than did the whole of Conception Bay and the rest of Newfoundland. However, while the numbers of migratory servants employed by the Brigus planters was probably quite large, perhaps double the population of servants who were residents of the community, their numbers cannot be easily estimated.

In 1807 there seems to have been only one large, English-based merchant establishment in Brigus, that of Geo. and James Kemp & Co of Poole. Their premises are given as:

> 138: Geo. and James Kemp & Co
> 1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 1 Wharf, 1 House, 1 Cook Room,
> 1 accounting House, 3 Stores, 1 Garden. Leased
> from Steph. Percey for 40 years at 6 pounds.
> ---: Geo. and James Kemp & Co
> 1 Dock for Building Vessels.[19]

The flakes suggest that they were involved in the Labrador fishery, while the dock suggests that they were also involved in the seal fishery.

There were 14 larger scale planters listed in 1807 and they comprise about one third of the property holding classes. These planters owned 60% of the houses in Brigus which would suggest that they employed at least that percentage of the labour force of the community and probably an even larger percentage. A number of these planters are known to have been the owners and, or, masters of sealing vessels, including Wm. Norman, Wm. Bartlett, and Azariah Mundon, and the family names, with the exception of Quinlan, were all closely associated with the seal fishery later in the nineteenth century. As well as being sealers and fishing on the French Shore and, or, Labrador, they may also have been operating as small scale supplying merchants, especially in the cod fishery. These larger scale planters and their plantations are listed in Figure 3.13. The ancillary industries which the Labrador and, especially, the seal fishery produced

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[19] The number given before the name of the owner(s) of the plantation is simply that given the entry in the records, --- indicates that no number was given to the entry.

is evidenced by the cooper's shop of Thos. Quinlan.

The largest group, numerically, listed in the *Return ..., 1807* is that of what probably represents small scale planters. They are listed in Figure 3.14. While this group represents almost half of the property owning population of Brigus, they owned only 28 percent of the houses, They probably employed no more than five to ten servants each during the summer fishing season and in the seal fishery they probably served on the vessels of the more prominent planters.

The final group is marked by the seeming lack of ownership of the means of production to operate independently in either the seal or cod fisheries, i.e. a stage or dock. The property holders in this group probably included both labourers and craftsmen. It would seem that skilled craftsmen, especially ships' carpenters, were both in demand and quite well off (see Smith 1936) during the period of the seal fishery in Brigus. They are listed in Figure 3.15.

V. Brigus, 1815 to 1880.

From about 1820 to about 1860 Brigus was at the height of its prosperity. The population of Brigus rose to 1200 in 1836 and to close to 2000 in the decade of 1870 to 1880 (see Table 15). By the decade 1850-1860 Brigus was probably the most important sealing port in Conception Bay if not in all of Newfoundland.[20]

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[20] The extent of the sealing fishery as carried out from St. John's is difficult to estimate. While the major outports, such as Brigus, Harbour Grace, Carbonear, and Trinity, probably only served as the sealing port for sealing vessels from the community itself and from neighboring communities, St. John's probably had vessels and crews from many areas of the island being supplied and clearing from there each spring.

Brigus had also come to be one of the dominant communities in the Labrador fishery, with its fishers operating both as floaters and as stationers. Brigus was the economic and political centre of the district of Port-de-Grave and for parts of the district of Harbour Main.

As has been stated above, Brigus's prosperity in this period was based on the *combination* of the seal and Labrador fisheries. While it was the prominence of the seal fishery which separated Brigus from many communities around Newfoundland, it was the year-round nature of activity, which the combination of the seal and Labrador fishery allowed, which was the basis for Brigus's prosperity. Both the seal and Labrador fisheries also served as the support for a host of ancillary industries, including ship building, cooperages, blacksmiths, and public houses.

The seal fishery demanded, and in turn supported, a concentration of population and capital which the smaller communities could not provide. This concentration of population could not be sustained by the local, inshore fishery alone, and the population of Brigus would probably not have risen to much above the population which existed there in the first half of the eighteenth century (probably not more than 200 people) if it had depended solely on it. However the community could not survive on the produce of the sealfishery alone and so, while, as Ryan (1971:47-8) has stated, the Labrador fishery was dependent on the sealfishery for its economic survival, so too was the sealfishery dependent on the Labrador fishery.

R. Bartlett places the high point of Brigus's prosperity in the decade 1850-1860 (1928:32-33). Records of the seal fishery from around that period give some idea of the extent of that industry (see Table 13). Seventy-two sealing vessels operated out of the district of Port-de-Grave in 1833 and the majority of these would have been from Brigus, though the 1533 men employed would have been from many different communities. In 1847 Brigus *outfitted* (i.e. the local merchants supplied) 66 sailing vessels, while St. John's outfitted 85. In 1848 Brigus outfitted 30 sailing vessels employing 1,080 men while St. John's seems to have taken over some of the supplying of those sealers, outfitting 103 vessels which employed 3,451 men; (Chafe 1924:40). In the same year, however, there were 66 Brigus owned sealing vessels, employing 2,111 men, most of whom were being supplied outside of Brigus[21] (Ryan 1971:148). The difference between the number of planters supplied for the sealing voyage in 1847 and in 1848 in Brigus and the number planters owning vessels in 1848 can be seen as further evidence of the relative independence of the planters of Brigus. It is further evidence that the economic relations existing between the Brigus planters and merchants were essentially those between capitalists and further hints at the relative importance and strength of the planter and merchant capitalists in Brigus. The high point of the sealfishery from Brigus seems to have occurred in 1856 when 92 sailing vessels (ranging in size from 50 to 172 tons) employing 3,493 men cleared from Brigus.

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[21] It should be noted that the 30 vessels supplied from Brigus in 1848 probably were not all from Brigus.

In the same year from St. John's there were 72 vessels employing 2,855 men (The Public Ledger March 21, 1856).

Before the shift of the centre of the seal fishery to St. John's in the 1870s each Saint Stephen's Day, December 26, as many as three thousand men seeking berths would come to the homes or offices of the Brigus sealing captains to sign on for the spring seal hunt (R. Bartlett 1928:96). In February these crews would go into *collar*, that is they would begin the preparations for the seal hunt, for which, as the crews were hired on shares (with shares amounting to half the catch), they would not specifically be paid for, though they would be fed and, if necessary lodged (R. Bartlett 1928:96). Before going to the ice the crew would be supplied with their *crop* (also *crap*). The crop was an advance of money or credits which would be paid back with between 25 and 50 per cent interest if any seals were brought in from the voyage. Some sealers would not use their crop or sent it home while others would use it to buy personal equipment necessary for the voyage (eg. a sheath and knife, skin boots, oilskins, and tobacco) (R. Bartlett 1020:95-101). The value of the crop plus interest would then be deducted from their wages at the end of the seal hunt (R. Bartlett 1928:92). At the start of the voyage the sealing crew would also pay *berth money*,[22] two or three dollars charged them, ostensibly, for their berths, to the owner of the vessel (who might be the captain or a merchant firm).[23]

[22] Not all crew members paid this, in particular the gunners who had to supply their own guns.

[23] In 1860 a strike against berth money took place in Brigus involving 3000 men. It seems to have been, at best, only partially successful (Chafe 1924:38).

The seal hunt itself continued to be much as it was described by Anspach in the first decade of the century. Until at least 1840 nearly all the skins were processed and the fat was manufactured into oil in Brigus (Chafe 1924:16). The crews' shares from the seal hunt could vary enormously, in some years the crews would not even make enough to cover the cost of their crop while in other years as much as $300 per man could be made (R. Bartlett 1928:92), two to three times what they could expect to make in a good summer at the Labrador. The overwhelming payment of wages in shares rather than set wages was probably due to the large risks involved in the seal fishery.

Before the introduction of steam vessels into the seal fishery many, if not most, of the Brigus planters were probably operating as floaters during the summer on the Labrador. After about 1880 most planters from Brigus, both floaters and stationers, fished north of Battle Harbour. Before about 1870 that was an area used mostly by floaters (see, Journal of the House of Assembly 1905:223 and 1853:128-28), while the area to the south and in the Straits of Belle Isle were conducted mostly by the larger fishing operations, from permanent premises on shore, based in St. John's, Harbour Grace, and Carbonear. The Brigus planters were supplied in Brigus, Harbour Grace, or St. John's (especially the latter). A number of the larger scale planters in turn served as suppliers to smaller planters, especially stationers who would not have had their own method of getting their supplies from St. John's.

Crews, consisting of both men and women, would sign on for the Labrador

fishery and go into collar about the middle of May. They would then begin the preparations for the summer fishery and get their crop consisting of fishing boots and oilskins.[24]

The vessels left Brigus for the Labrador in early June and arrived there any time from mid-June to early July, depending on weather and ice conditions. On the Labrador only the men seem to have been involved in catching fish, while both men and women were employed in cleaning and curing the fish and women generally performed the cooking and cleaning tasks aboard the vessels or on the premises ashore (see Journal of the House of Assembly 1853:128-9). Among the men wages were paid both in shares and set wages and were referred to as either *going on shares* or being *shipped* (for those on fixed wages). Shares consisted of one half of what the sharemen individually caught or a share of one half of all the fish caught. Women seem to have always been shipped and to have generally received significantly lower wages than men; they were generally referred to as *girls* and seem to have been predominantly unmarried and without children. The married women and children who went to Labrador seem to have mostly been the wives and children of the planters (see Chapter 4). The crews would return to Brigus in October and that fish which had not been dried or sold on the Labrador would be dried there. The planter would then generally deliver his fish to the supplying merchant or pay off his debt to the merchant if the fish had already

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[24] This was for the men, whether and what the women received as their crop is not known though they did go into collar.

been sold and the crew would be paid off. There were no banking facilities in Brigus so many planters kept an account with the merchants from which they drew cash or bills of exchange on during the year, though some also used the profits from their summer account to buy up supplies for small stores at Brigus (R. Bartlett 1928:99-101, 61-62)

It is clear that during the period of Brigus's florescence the planters, as a class, dominated the social, economic, and political life of the community, and Brigus's prosperity was dependent on the prosperity of its planters. The height of the planters prosperity was synonymous with the maximum extent of straightforward capitalist relations of production within primary production in both the seal and Labrador fisheries. While it need be kept in mind that the difference between the production capitalists (i.e. the planters proper) and the merchant capitalists (i.e. the merchants) was often far from precise (with planters also acting as small scale merchants and merchants often being directly involved in primary production), the economic conditions favoured the production capitalists and led to the relative weakness of the merchant capitalists in Brigus.

The failure of all of the large Brigus merchants in the nineteenth century, Geo. and James Kemp & Co. in 1817, Charles Cozens in 1833, Robert & Co. by circa 1870 (Tocque 1878:121), and J. & G. Smith in 1882 (Smith 1936:32); is perhaps an indication of this. The relative economic independence of the Brigus planters may have made it difficult for these firms to average out the periods of high and low prices for dried cod.

A number of the prominent planter families from the first decade of the nineteenth century, among whom were the Bartletts, the Mundens, the Perceys, the Whelans, the Roberts, the Wilcoxs, and the Normans, as well as some new family names, for example the Leamons,[25] were able to impose their families' "...views as those most in accord with a gradually accepted *community view*...." (Kerr 1973:213-14), and so came to dominate the community of Brigus and continued to do so long after the community began to decline in size and importance. An informant, speaking of one of these families, reminiscing about the 1030s, summed this up as:

> Oh my God, I mean, they were pretty set in their opinions, of what they wanted, you know, and their opinions usually lead, lead the way the community went, or lead the way the church went, or lead the way things went. Because they had this social influence, this influence over, and they had to have the where-with-all, they were probably better off financially than most of the average Brigus people and they had the where-with-all to back up their, you know, their desires. (Interview #5).

The picture drawn by Robert Bartlett (1928:42-60) of Brigus and of its leading families is of a community much like many other small industrial centres along the Atlantic seaboard in the first half of the nineteenth century and of an overtly stratified class society where status differences were highlighted by the leading families of the community. The basis of their position as leaders of the community, their "social influence,", was, besides and probably more importantly than simply their wealth, their direct control of jobs (R. Bartlett n.d.:99) and

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[25] Whom Tocque (1878:121) described as "some of the richest planters in Newfoundland."

their ability, the "where-with-all", to translate their access to jobs and their wealth, into recognized leadership of the community and the imposition of their views as the community view.

The Bartlett family was an example of one of these planter families in Brigus. The Bartletts were active in the seal fishery from its beginnings and were among the most famous of the family names associated with that fishery in Newfoundland. The scale of their operations was such that thousands of dollars could be made or lost in a single season of sealing and codfishing (R. Bartlett 1928:55,101), and the profits from them could be put back into the purchase and construction of larger ships (culminating, as will be seen below, ironically, in steam sealing ships), the construction of the locally famous Brigus tunnel (constructed to increase the area of accessible waterfront), and the physical manifestations of wealth and influence (the large churchs which dominate Brigus, elegant residences, and the local gentlemen's club, first the *Glee Club* and later the *Jubilee Club*, see Smith 1936:94-96).

The population data for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries come from the censi of Newfoundland taken at about ten year intervals from the year 1836. The pattern shown by the growth of population in Brigus in the nineteenth century closely followed the fortunes of the seal fishery. There are three discernible phases in the overall growth in population in the period up to 1880 (see Table 15). The first is one of rapid population growth and goes from the beginning of the century to about 1850, and was undoubtably directly tied to the growth of the seal fishery which marked this same period. The second phase is marked by

a leveling off in population growth and corresponds to stagnation in the seal fishery which occurred from about 1860 (Ryan 1971:17, 25). Another factor affecting Brigus, in particular, in this period was probably the high density in population in Brigus, and in particular limits on the amount of waterfront available in Brigus. By contrast, Port-de-Grave as a whole continued to grow after population growth had leveled off in Brigus. The final phase, which continued through the first half of the twentieth century, was marked by a decline which started about the year 1880, and will be discussed in the Chapter 4.

The rate of migration to and from Brigus also follows the three phases outline above. The period from 1800 to about 1850 was one of net immigration for Brigus and was also tied to the growth of seal fishery. Until 1816 the majority of immigrants to Brigus probably came directly or indirectly from overseas, in particular from England and Ireland. After 1816, however, most of the immigrants would have come from other areas of Newfoundland; though some were still coming from abroad, especially skilled craftsmen.[26] The period from 1850 to 1880 was one of net emigration, but the rate was lower than the rate of natural increase (less than 1% per annum), and corresponded to the stagnation in the seal fishery. After about 1880 there was a rapid rise in the rate of emigration from Brigus (see Chapter 4).

The nature of work done in Brigus also followed the fortunes of the seal

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[26] An example of this was Nicholas Smith's father, a ships carpenter who came to Brigus, via St. John's, from England to build sealing vessels in 1843 (Smith 1936:9-11).

fishery. With the decline in that fishery there is a shift from fishing, i.e. both the seal and Labrador fisheries, to other occupations with a progressively smaller per cent of the population involved in fishing as the century progressed (see Table 16).

FIGURES

Figure 3.1
Averages of summer population, 1720-1791, Conception Bay.

Years	Masters	Men servants	Mist-resses	Women servants	Children
1720-1727	79	342	68	14	207
1730-1739	72	407	62	12	230
1740-1749	95	494	65	25	205
1750-1759	225	1283	169	64	707
1760-1764	283	1452	222	214	1023
1776	480	2350	430	357	2180
1786-1789	757	1715	428	328	2231
1700-1791	573	1150	347	408	2537

Figure 3.2
Averages of winter population, 1720-1829, Conception Bay.

Years	Masters	Men servants	Mist-resses	Women servants	Children	Total
1723-1727	87	304	76	10	184	491
1730-1739	66	313	62	12	227	680
1740-1749	81	452	70	28	215	846
1750-1759	207	1002	168	63	692	2133
1760-1768	277	1587	236	191	1273	3564
1774-1776	465	2154	432	350	1510	4938
1786-1788	677	1451	394	306	2433	5261
1793-1798	616	1309	623	491	2485	5526
1801-1809	1065	1372	976	205	3736	7353
1811-1819	1157	2504	1249	979	4893	10782
1820-1829	1695	4701	1652	1950	6404	16334

Figure 3.3
Average numbers of boats 1697 to 1820, Conception Bay.

	Numbers				Percentages		
YEARS	A	B	C	D	A	B	C
1697-1702	145	8	61	214	68	4	29
1700-1709	55	4	30	89	62	4	34
1710-1719	129	1	49	179	72	1	27
1720-1729	86	10	27	123	70	8	22
1730-1739	74	5	24	103	72	5	23
1740-1749	99	27	26	152	65	18	17
1750-1759	215	62	43	320	67	19	13
1760-1768	286	93	29	408	70	23	7
1774-1775	554	127	41	722	77	18	6
1786-1789	327	44	41	412	79	11	10
1790-1798	321	16	7	344	93	5	2
1801-1809	553	0	4	557	99	0	1
1811-1819	532	0	0	532	100	0	0
1820-1829	441	0	0	441	100	0	0

A, Inhabitants' boats. B, Bye-boats.
C, Fishing ships' boats. D, Total.

Figure 3.4
Average ratios of summer to winter population of inhabitants, 1720 to 1826, Conception Bay.

Years	averages	Years	averages
1720-1727	1.18	1786-1788	1.18
1730-1739	1.16	1794-1798	.95
1740-1749	1.23	1802-1809	1.07
1750-1759	1.20	1811-1819	1.14
1760-1764	1.30	1820-1826	1.14

Note that a number less than one indicates that, if the figures be correct, the population was dropping and that people who had stayed the previous winter were leaving the district before the start of the fishing season.

Figure 3.5

The percentage of male servants of resident masters who did not spend the previous winter around Conception Bay.

Years	Average	Years	Average
1723-1727	17	1760-1764	39
1730-1739	25	1786-1788	24
1794-1796	9	1802-1808	29
1740-1749	30	1811-1819	38
1750-1759	28	1820-1826	30

The figures from 1794 on are estimated by taking the difference between the overall summer and winter populations under the assumption that the migratory population is made up, overwhelmingly, of male servants. The average ratios of the summer population to the winter population of men servants for Conception Bay for the years 1750-1788, was 1.22, whereas the same averages for masters, mistresses, women servants, and children were 1.08, 1.02, 1.06, and 1.01, respectively. Note that from 1794 on among those migratory servants there probably were persons coming from other areas of Newfoundland.

Figure 3.6

Women as a percentage of working age winter population of inhabitants (averages), Conception Bay 1723-1829.

Years	Mistresses	Female servants	Total
1723-1727	16	1	17
1730-1739	14	3	17
1740-1749	12	5	17
1750-1759	12	4	16
1760-1768	11	9	20
1774-1776	13	10	23
1786-1788	14	11	25
1793-1798	20	16	36
1801-1809	27	6	33
1811-1819	22	16	38
1820-1829	17	19	36

Figure 3.7
Children as a percentage of winter population of inhabitants, Conception Bay.

Years	Average	Mean	Years	Average	Mean
1723-1727	30	28	1786-1788	47	46
1730-1739	29	34	1793-1798	46	50
1740-1749	27	25	1801-1809	51	51
1750-1759	31	31	1811-1819	46	46
1760-1768	33	39	1820-1829	39	36
1774-1776	28	38			

Figure 3.8
Averages of percentage of working age population.

Years	Masters	Men servants	Mistresses	Women servants	Total servants
1720-1727	17	64	15	3	67
1730-1739	15	68	14	3	71
1740-1749	14	69	12	5	74
1750-1759	15	69	12	4	73
1760-1768	13	68	11	9	77
1774-1776	14	63	13	10	73
1786-1789	25	50	14	5	55
1790-1798	21	44	18	16	60
1801-1809	30	37	27	6	43
1811-1819	20	42	22	16	58
1820-1829	18	46	17	19	65

Figure 3.9.
Inconsistencies in the 1845 and 1857 censi.

	1845	1857	Percent change.
A. Total population	96,295	119,304	24
B. Professions (and merchants, 1857)	914	837	- 8
C. Planters, fishermen, shoremen, etc.	18,503	38,578	108
D. Tradesmen (Mechanics and lumbering, 1857)	1,489	2,304	55
E. Farmers	621	1,552	150
F. Total B-E	21,527	43,271	101
G. Ablebodied seamen engaged in trade and fishing	-	20,311	
H. Total B-E and G	21,527	63,582	
I. Total males 14-70 of age	31,230	35,400	
J. Difference between I and F	-9,703	+7,781	
K. Difference between I and H	-9,703	+28,092	

Figure 3.10.
Land holdings registered or recorded in Brigus by year, 1745-1807.

Year		Year		Year	
1745	2	1778	27	1798	40
1763	3	1780	29	1800	42
1768	7	1784	30	1802	44
1769	10	1785	34	1803	45
1770	18	1786	35	1804	46
1771	19	1790	37	1807	47
1772	24	1797	39		

Figure 3.11.

Numbers of family names found in Brigus by year.

Pre-1760	6	1772	16	1798	25
1763	7	1778	17	1800	26
1768	9	1784	20	1802	27
1769	11	1785	23	1803	29
1770	14	1797	24		

Figure 3.12.

Summary of property holdings in Brigus, 1807

Properties	44	Houses	89
Flakes	68	Stores	3
Accounting houses	1	Cook rooms	1
Cooper's shops	1	Wharfs	4
Stages (includes 2 properties with 2 each)			36
Docks for building vessels			1
Properties with at least 1 stage or wharf			35
Properties with at least 1 flake			23
Properties with at least 1 house			39
Property owners, partnerships or families without stages, wharfs, or flakes			7
Listed property owners, partnerships or families			43

Figure 3.13.
Large scale planters in Brigus, 1807.

126: James Goushou
1 Stage, 3 Flakes, 3 Houses, 6 Gardens, 2 Meadows.
128: John Sparks
1 Stage, 1 Wharf, 4 Flakes, 4 Houses, 2 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
129: John Antle
1 Stage, 1 Wharf, 4 Flakes, 4 Houses, 5 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
131: Willm. Antle Jun.
1 Wharf 2 Flakes, 3 Houses, 3 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
132: Edwd. Percey Sen
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 3 Houses, 6 Gardens.
133: Wm. Percey (son of Steph. Percey)
1 Stage, 4 Flakes, 5 Houses, 2 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
135: Jas. and Wm. Norman
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 4 Houses, 10 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
136: Jn. and Wm. Bartlett
2 Stages, 3 Flakes, 3 Houses, 8 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
139: All the Sons of Wm Roberts Sen
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 4 Houses, 6 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
142: Wm. Roberts Sen.
1 Stage, 3 Flakes, 3 Houses, 3 Gardens.
144: Thos. Quinlan
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 4 Houses, 1 Cooper's Shop, 4 Gardens.
145: Wm. Percey and James and Thomas Roberts
2 Stages, 2 Flakes, 7 Houses, 4 Gardens, 2 Meadows.
150: Saml. Sprackling
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 3 Houses, 4 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
153: Azariah Mundon
1 Stage, 3 Flakes, 3 Houses, 3 Gardens, 1 Meadow.

Figure 3.14.
Small scale planters in Brigus, 1807.

118: Willm. Phelan
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 1 Garden, 1 Meadow.
119: James Walker
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 2 Houses, 1 Garden.
120: Widow King and Sons
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 1 Garden, 1 Meadow.
121: John Woolcock
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 2 Gardens.
122: Thomas Rose
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 2 Gardens.
123: James Hays
1 stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 1 Garden.
124: John Clark and Isaac Clark
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 1 House, 2 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
125: Charles Merser
1 Stage, 2 flakes, 1 House, 2 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
127: Ambrose Sparks Son to Willm. Sparks
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 1 Garden.
130: John Noel
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 1 House, 1 Garden.
137: Wm. Antle Sen
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 2 Houses, 5 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
140: Dinah Roberts
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 1 House, 1 Garden.
141: John Rabbits Sen. and John Rabbits Jun..
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 2 Houses, 3 Gardens.
143: William Antle and Widow Antle
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 2 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
146: Grace Norman
1 Stage, 3 Flakes, 2 Houses, 4 Gardens.
147: Ann Roberts
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 2 Houses, 3 Gardens, 1 Meadow.
148: Simon Sprackling
1 Stage 1 Flake, 1 House, 2 Gardens.
149: Wm. Keating 18
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 1 House, 2 Gardens.
151: Robt. Knight
1 Stage, 2 Flakes, 1 House, 3 Gardens.
152: John Plowman
1 Stage, 1 Flake, 1 House, 1 Garden.

-Chapter Four-

THE DECLINE OF BRIGUS, 1880-1945

The period from 1880 to 1945 is marked by a rapid decline in the population of Brigus and a corresponding decline in economic activity and prosperity of the community. Its population probably peaked about the year 1880 at approximately 2200 (see Table 15). Between the 1884 census and that of 1891 the population dropped from 2150 to 1541, representing an annual per capita decrease in population of over four per cent; a rate which, if it had continued, would have seen the population halve every 17 years. Its population continued to decrease after that, though at a less precipitous rate, reaching 936 in 1921. This represented an annual, per capita decrease between 1911 and 1921 of close to one per cent, (see Table 15). The population of Brigus continued to decrease in the 1920s. With the Depression of the 1930s, however, the decline was arrested and there appears to have been a slight increase. This short term shift in the pattern of demographic change was probably caused by the return of Brigus natives who had emigrated to other areas of Newfoundland, Canada, and the United States, a result of the growing unemployment in those areas. The population remained stable between 1935 and 1945, but it continued to decrease thereafter, bottoming out in the 1950s. The population of the district of Port-de-Grave shows a similar, though less dramatic, population decline during the same period (see Table 15). Behind this fall in population was the decline in the seal fishery. This decline in the seal fishery took the form of both a general, island wide decline of that fishery, and a more dramatic collapse of the Brigus seal fishery.

I. The decline in the seal fishery.

A general decline in the seal fishery took place from the 1860s and affected the seal fishery of all areas of the island (Ryan 1971:17, 25). This general decline in the industry, and a corresponding decline in the seal fishery's ancillary industries, was compounded for Brigus and the other Conception Bay communities by the introduction of steam vessels into the seal fishery at about the same time.

The causes of the general decline in the seal fishery are unclear; however, a decline in demand for seal oil (with its replacement by mineral and vegetable oils; Chafe 1894:4) and, perhaps, overexploitation of the seal herds were probably the two most important reasons for the decline.[1] The more rapid decline at Brigus is, on the contrary, quite clearly connected with the introduction of steam vessels in the seal fishery and the consequent rapid decline in the numbers of sailing vessels operating from there. The rapidity of this decline seems to have been a direct result of the large St. John's merchants' introduction of steamships into the fishery, rather than simply the gradual replacement of sailing vessels by steamships. It would seem that with their investment in sealing steamers that the merchant firms stopped further supplying of the sailing sealers and so made it impossible for the sailing fleet to continue operating.

The first steamers were introduced in the seal fishery in 1863, and by 1867

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[1] In the 1850s as many as 600 thousand seals were taken annually, and many more were killed, but not taken. Comparatively, the estimated sustainable yield of harp seals for the early 1970s was estimated at 125,000 animals annually (*Royal Commission on Labrador* 1974:553), with very few seals killed but not taken.

the *S.S. Panther* was sailing from Brigus and continued to do so until 1872 (except for 1870), and from 1871 to 1873 two steamers operated out of Brigus. The *S.S. Panther* was captained (and, perhaps, leased or co-owned) by one of the prominent Brigus planters, Abraham Bartlett.[2] By 1876, however, the *S.S. Panther* and the other steamers, were gone from Brigus. After that date, Abraham, or another Bartlett, continued to be master of the *S.S. Panther* though it sailed from of St. John's. At the same time the large St. John's firms (and the single large Harbour Grace firm) began to drastically cut back on their supply for the Brigus sailing sealers. By 1877, when only seven sealers (all sailing vessels) were going to the ice from Brigus, all but two of the Brigus sealing masters were forced to supply themselves, alone or in combination with other planters, whereas previously most had been supplied by the larger merchant firms (see Lundrigan 1973). By 1886 the steamers had totally replaced sailing vessels in the seal fishery (Ryan 1971:17, 22) and the St. John's and Harbour Grace sealing fleets had displaced that from Brigus.

While the reasons Brigus did not continue to develop the steam seal fishery are not clear it is probably related to the fact that Brigus lacked any of the large export and supply companies, such as were based in St. John's and, to a lesser extent, in Harbour Grace (Kerr 1973:252-55, Tocque 1878:121).[3] As Ryan has

[2] Robert A. Bartlett (1928:57) claimed that the vessel was owned by Abraham Bartlett and captained by his son John Bartlett, however the ships papers record Robert Grieve, merchant at St. John's, as owner (Board of Trade 99, Agreements and Crew Lists, series 2 1874).

[3] Note that while Abraham Bartlett was operating the *S.S. Panther* out of Brigus he was being supplied by Baine Johnston, the managing owners of the vessel, from St.

suggested, it was probably only the larger mercantile firms, which were based in St. John's and Harbour Grace, which had the capital resources necessary to finance the purchase of steam vessels (Ryan 1971:22-5). The culmination of the growth in the use of steamers in the seal fishery was a shift in the seal fishery, the ancillary work that the seal fishery produced (shipbuilding, manufacture of oil, etc.), and, ultimately, population to St. John's, with a corresponding decline around Conception Bay (Ryan 1971:22-5).

II. The Labrador fishery.

As the seal fishery died out in Brigus, the community became increasingly dependent on the Labrador fishery alone. While the basis of the prosperity of the Brigus planters (and the community in general) had been the combination of the spring seal fishery and the summer Labrador cod fishery, the collapse of the seal fishery saw the planter fishery at the Labrador continue. In fact, the Labrador fishery from Conception Bay probably reached its peak, at least in terms of production, in the late nineteenth century, though the character of the fishery changed due to the effects of changes in the seal fishery.

A. The Labrador floater fishery.

The sector of the Labrador cod fishery which showed the greatest decline around Brigus and Conception Bay, was the floater fishery. Before the advent of

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John's, and and with the move of the vessel to St. John's they remained his supplier (see Chafe 1924:48-51).

steamers in the seal fishery, Conception Bay had been one of the centres of the Labrador floater fishery. The schooners and larger sailing vessels which had made up the Brigus sealing fleet had been used during the summer in the Labrador cod fishery. However, as these sailing vessels were replaced by steamers in the seal fishery the sailing vessels had to be financed entirely on the returns of the summer Labrador fishery. While some of the floaters' vessels were used in the coasting trade, and a few of the larger ones in the trans-Atlantic trade (though sail was being replaced by steam in this industry as well), most could not and the numbers and average size (as larger vessels were not needed on the Labrador) of the Labrador vessels declined (Ryan 1971:53-54). As the average size of the Labrador schooners decreased, more of the remaining floaters came from the more northern coasts of Newfoundland, in particular Bonavista Bay, Notre Dame Bay, and Trinity Bay.

An overall decline in the Labrador floater fleet took place in the 1880s and 1890s. However, with the rise in the price of dried cod at the turn of the century, the decline of the French and American fisheries, and the availablity of cheap, used banking schooners from the increasingly steam powered Nova Scotia fishing fleet, there was an increase in the numbers of floaters to a high of 1,432 in 1908 (Innis 1954:457). This increase in the number of floaters, however, seems to have been confined primarily to the northern coast of Newfoundland, while the number of floaters from Conception Bay continued to decline. After about 1910 the Labrador floater fishery, as a whole, continued to decline.

The decline in the Brigus Labrador floater fishery was steady, though not so precipitous as that of the seal fishery. This decline generally followed that of the local population rather than led it. In the period from 1840 to 1860 there had probably been between 30 and 50 floaters operating out of Brigus, most of which would also have been operating in the seal fishery in the spring of the year (see Table 13). While it is not clear what was happening to the numbers of floaters during the years 1868 to 1884, when steamers were replacing sailing vessels in the seal fishery, Smith (1936:11-12) reports that there were "about forty vessels all engaged in the Labrador fishery, from a 200-ton brig down to a 30-ton fore and aft schooner..." in the 1870s. In 1884 there were 36 vessels (averaging 62 tons) operating in the fishery from Brigus, and probably all of these would have been engaged at the Labrador; in the same year there was only one vessel operating in the seal fishery from Brigus (a schooner of 65 tons). In 1891 there were 19 vessels (average tonnage 67) owned in Brigus and engaged in the fishery, in 1901 there were 23 (average tonnage 54), while the numbers dropped to four (average tonnage 73) in 1911, seven (average tonnage 83) in 1921, and none in 1935 (see Table 13). From 1911 onwards most, if not all, of the vessels were probably owned by Brigus planter-merchant firms, serving primarily as freighters to and from Labrador and as fish collectors along the coast, and used as floaters (i.e. in fishing itself) only secondarily.

The decline in the floater fleet seems to have caused a decline in two dependent activities, the repair of the floaters' vessels and the drying of the wet salted fish which the floaters brought back from Labrador.

B. The Labrador stationer fishery.

While the number of floaters fishing on the Labrador from Brigus and the rest of Conception Bay declined steadily from the 1880s, there was, at least a relative, increase in the number of stationers operating from the region. The amount of fish caught at the Labrador by Brigus fishers rose in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, going from 29,739 quintals and 28,419 quintals in 1873 and 1883, respectively, to 38,960 quintals in 1890 and 36,865 quintals in 1900. At the same time the number of cod traps, introduced at the end of the 1870s (Smith 1936:15-16),[4] was increasing rapidly. The increases in the quantity of cod caught and in the number of cod traps were in the context of decreases in the number of schooners, the population of the community, and the number of people involved in fishing (both absolutely and as a percentage of the working population; see Tables 13 and 16).

The Labrador stationer fishery from around Conception Bay, started to decline from sometime near the end of the first decade of the twentieth century and continued to do so through the 1920s. There was a slight increase in the fishery during the 1930s, due, probably, to several factors: the return of former fishermen, as a result of the world wide depression, from industrial employment in other areas of Newfoundland and North America; a lack of any other employment around Conception Bay; and some support for the fishery by the

[4] Smith's exact dating of the events early in his life are wrong, he dates the first coming of the cod trap to the Brigus Labrador fishery to 1875; checking his date against other records places it as taking place in 1879.

Commission Government. However, with the start of the Second World War and the employment boom it created in Newfoundland, the Labrador fishery dropped off rapidly.

Even without an increase in the number of stationers, the decrease in the numbers of floaters would, inevitably, have contributed to a rise in the relative number of stationers and importance of that fishery to the Conception Bay communities. However, the absolute number of stationers seems to have increased as large numbers of floaters switched to stationing at the Labrador in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. At the same time, the decline in the number of floaters' schooners presented a problem for the stationers from Conception Bay. Stationers previously had depended, almost exclusively, on the floaters' schooners for transportation to and from the Labrador, and with the decrease in the number of floaters the stationers and their supplying merchants had to find other ways to get to and from their summer fishing stations. Steamships, often the same ones used in the seal fishery, were the solution to this problem, as well as a further encouragement to the growth of the stationer fishery. In fact, it would seem that the first use of steamers as transport to the Labrador was undertaken by one of the large-scale planter-merchants of Brigus, Capt. Abraham Bartlett, at least as early as 1874 (*Board of Trade 99, Agreements and Crew Lists, series 2*, 1874, JHA v.20, n.1 1905:236-40), using his sealing steamer the *S.S. Panther*.

By 1905 four firms were regularly using steam vessels to transport their crews, as well as independent planters, to and from the Labrador: Job Bros. &

Co., at Blanc Sablon; Baine Johnston & Co., at Battle Harbor; G. C. Jerrett (of Brigus), at Smokey; and Capt. William Bartlett (also of Brigus), at Turnavick (JHA v.20, n.1 1905:222). While the Bartlett family evidently utilized steamers for transportation to the Labrador from at least 1874, before there seems to have been any shortage of sailing vessels, by 1890 it seems the number of schooners available was inadequate to take all of the stationers from Conception Bay down to the Labrador, and it was claimed (JHA v.20, n.1 1905:232-6) that this was the reason that G. C. Jerrett started to charter steamships around that time.

Three further factors probably account for the rise in the importance and relative numbers of stationers from Conception Bay. These factors were the introduction of the cod trap in the 1870s to the Labrador fishery, the introduction of motor boats in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the increasing tendency of merchants to ship dried cod directly from the coast of Labrador to the export markets (especially in the use of steamers for this purpose).

The combination of the introduction of steamers for transportation to and from Labrador and the general use of the cod trap, put stationers in an advantageous position in relation to the remaining floaters. In many years, especially when there was heavy ice, the steamers allowed the stationers to get to the Labrador before the floaters and so to secure the best traps berths for their use during the summer. In response to the fears expressed by some interests in the fishing industry, especially those interests representing the floaters, the Newfoundland House of Assembly set up a Select Committee to investigate the possiblity of enacting legislation prohibiting the prosecution of the Labrador

fishery in steam vessels (JHA v.20, n.1 1905:222-269).

The committee saw two dangers in the use of steamers; 1) the possible use of steamers as "green fish catchers" (i.e. directly in fishing), 2) "...the creation of a monopoly in the prime trap berths of the Labrador Coast." (JHA v.20, n.1 1905:223).

> It also appears to the Committee quite feasible to use steamers successfully in the prosecution of the Labrador fishery, for the purpose of distributing crews, gear and material, and so taking up the prime trap berths in advance of the ordinary fishing crews, arriving by sailing vessels, to the manifest disadvantage of all "stationers" not arriving by steamers and also of all "floaters." This can easily be done—is already being done to some extent south of Cape Harrigan, and with a very small initial outlay for stages, etc., can be done on the northern Labrador. (JHA v.20, n.1 1905:223)

The recommendations of of the Select Committee were that:

> Inasmuch as the real value of the Labrador fishery to the people of this Colony consists in the fact that it can now be carried on so cheaply that no man of industrious habits need fear of a fair measure of success therein, and consequently it affords a livelihood for a large and frugal population of independent people, the Committee is persuaded that anything which threatens to destroy the conditions under which the fishery is now conducted is a public menace of great magnitude, and should be grappled with in a drastic manner. We are of opinion, therefore, that... [a Bill]... should be adopted so that the pursuit of the green fishery in steamers shall be made unlawful. (JHA v.20, n.1 1905:223)

Such a bill, outlawing something never seriously practiced, was duly passed by the Legislature and no harm was done to the stationer fisbery.

Actually steamers never totally displaced schooners as a means of getting to the Labrador. Up through the Second World War both steamers and schooners took crews to the Labrador, often with one or two members of a fishing crew going in advance by steamer to secure a good trap berth while the rest of the

crew followed on a schooner (see for an example of this Smith 1936:106, 111-12, 134-35, 147-51). Later the extension of the government steam service to northern Labrador and the establishment of the *fishermen's ticket*, allowing fishing crews to travel on the government steamer at minimal cost, became the means for stationers to get to the Labrador (Innis 1954:458-9). However, as late as the start of the Second World War as many as half of the crews from Brigus and the surrounding areas went down to the Labrador by schooner (*Interview #1*).

As has been mentioned above, the introduction of the cod trap had an important effect on the Labrador fishery. The cod trap was invented by Captain W.H. Whiteley of Bonne Esperance, on the Canadian Labrador, in 1866. But the Canadian Government outlawed its use in 1868 and its use remained illegal until 1870, when the ruling was reversed (Whiteley 1977:38). The cod trap seems to have been introduced into the Newfoundland Labrador fishery in 1879 (Smith 1936:15-16).[5] Before its introduction, handlining, particularly jigging, seems to have been the most widely used method for catching fish on the Labrador (see Smith 1936:11-15). While cod seines had been used fairly extensively on the Labrador before the advent of the cod trap (see JHA 1853 v. 5 n. 1:122-32), they were never so widely used as the cod trap was to become by the last decade of the nineteenth century. By 1920 the use of cod seines seems to have ceased.

The numbers of cod traps in Brigus increased rapidly, from none in 1873, to

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[5] See note on Smith's dating above.

119 in 1883, to 107 in 1890, and 142 in 1900, all of which would have been employed at the Labrador.[6] The high ratio of cod traps to the population engaged in fishing in Brigus, relative to the rest of Newfoundland (see Table 16), indicates, among other things, the importance and general acceptance of the cod trap in the Labrador fishery. In the twentieth century the cod trap came to be the dominant fishing technology on the Labrador.

The cod trap was ideally suited for the Labrador stationer fishery in a number of ways. The run of cod fish on the Labrador tended to be intense though short, and the fish were generally smaller than those found around the island of Newfoundland. The cod trap can take large numbers of fish in a short period of time and the fish it takes tend to be smaller in size (*Inter-departmental Committee on the Labrador Fisheries* 1954:19). The cod trap was of particular advantage to the stationers at the Labrador because it is not, essentially, a mobile fishing technology. In any area along the coast of Labrador there are a limited number of good trap berths into which cod traps can be put and these berths can usually be relied upon to catch fish if they are being caught anywhere on the Labrador. Because of the essentially immobile character of the cod trap, the advantage of moving if no fish were being caught on one part of the coast (the advantage the floaters had over the stationers) was small. Any advantage in moving was made even smaller because, in moving, the floater abandoned his

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[6] As was mentioned in the Introduction, there was no significant local inshore fishery from Brigus.

trap berth and on his arrival in a new location, as late arrivals, the floater's choice of good berths would have been limited by earlier arrivals. There was also a good chance that, in any case, there would be no fish being caught in the area the floater moved to or at any other place along the coast. In the region north of Cape Harrison on the Labrador coast there were fewer people fishing and the arrival of cod was less predictable. It was in this region that more of the floater fleet could be found.

Because the cod trap was a passive fishing technology, that is, it did not need to be attended while it was catching fish, and because traps were usually hauled twice, or perhaps once, a day, the need for a specialized shore crew for processing the fish (i.e. splitting, salting, and drying the fish) was not necessary and the fishing crews were generally able to handle all aspects of *putting away the fish.*

The introduction of powerboats in the first decade of the twentieth century gave the stationers further advantages over the floaters. With motor driven trap boats stationers were able to reach trap berths further out from their shore stations, berths which had previously been reserved for the schooner fishing crews. By 1914 it was estimated that there were over 4,000 motor boats in Newfoundland (Innis 1954:458-9), and a disproportionate number of these were probably found on the Labrador.

While some dried cod had been exported directly from the coast of Labrador since the eighteenth century, the prevalence of this practice increased dramatically after about 1885, when the merchants started to export large cargoes by

steamship (Smith 1936:17-18, *The Mail and Advocate* July 10 and 12, 1915). Floaters generally could not dry their fish on the Labrador (see Chapter 2), so the fish shipped directly from the coast of Labrador was that *made* (i.e. cured) by the stationers. Due to the practice of the merchants of paying *current price* (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 and below), the stationers were guaranteed at least the price which the merchants paid the floaters in the fall of the year in St. John's, and, in fact, the stationers would often receive a better price on the Labrador than would later be paid in St. John's. The ability to dispose of their fish either on the Labrador or at home in Newfoundland were further advantages which stationers enjoyed over floaters.

III. The Class Structure and Relations of Production.

The class structure of Brigus and the relations of production which dominated its fishery showed no radical changes during the period of the community's decline (1880-1945). The gradual demise of the planters' fishery in Brigus in this period (especially in the latter part of this period, 1920 to 1930) was marked not by its replacement by some other set of relations of production within the fishery but rather by the gradual decline of the fishery and of the community as a whole. Much the same pattern of decline seems to have marked the other areas of Conception Bay.

A. The Merchants.

The shift of the merchant activity from Brigus to St. John's, which had begun earlier in the century, continued in this period. After 1882, with the

failure of J. & G. Smith (Smith 1936:32), there were, for a time, no longer any large, purely mercantile firms in Brigus. The firms which remained in Brigus were not like the large, vertically integrated companies which dominated both supply and production in Carbonear (see Neis 1980:121-23), nor the large, more purely mercantile firms of Harbour Grace (in particular Munn & Co.). The mercantile activities of Brigus in the last quarter of the nineteenth century tended instead to be relatively small sideline operations of the larger planters.

These planter-merchants would get supplies for their own relatively large scale fishing operations (i.e. four to twenty cod traps with two to ten fishing crews as well as a shore crew) from the large St. John's merchant firms. They also supplied yet smaller scale planters (usually on credit) and usually disposed of those planters' production, and any other dried cod they could purchase, along with their own. The scale of these merchant-planters varied considerably, from those serving as little more than guarantors of another fishing crew to those operating as many as twenty cod traps and supplying as many more independent planters.

An example of the smaller scale planter-merchant was Nicholas Smith (see Smith 1936), whose career is described in more detail in the following section. At the other end of the scale were operations such as were carried out by the firm of G.C. Jerrett (which became C. & F. Jerrett in 1903) and Capt. William Bartlett. G.C. Jerrett and then his sons, C.A. & F. Jerrett, operated out of Indian Harbour and Smokey, Labrador, until 1905 when the sons split up into two separate companies, with C.A. Jerrett at Indian Harbour and F. Jerrett at Smokey. In 1904

they operated thirty six traps, with a crew of four or five to a trap, and a shore crew to handle the curing. They supplied thirty-five planters who, on average, would each have had one or two cod traps. Most of the planters were located around Smokey, so when they split F. Jerrett took over most of the supply business (JHA v. 20 n. 1 1905:269) while C.A. Jerrett reported:

> I live at Brigus and do business there as well as at Indian Tickle, Labrador. I have been connected with the Labrador trade 30 or 40 years. I did business in Indian Hr. in 1914. I had fishermen catching fish for me. Outside of that I would buy from any person I could buy from. I supply planters and fishermen as well. I exported fish last year on my own account. It went abroad by sailing vessels. (*The Mail and Advocate* June 30, 1915 evidence of Charles A. Jerrett)

As late as 1934, C.A. Jerrett had "...between 25 and 30 crews of his own on the coast [of Labrador], as well as a number of crews whom he will supply." (*The Guardian* April 5, 1934).

By the end of the 1930s or the early 1940s C.A. Jerrett's business around Smokey seems to have shrunk considerably, but it was still based on a mix of direct production and mercantile activity:

> [C.A. Jerrett was it?]
>
> C.A. Jerrett, that's the man, that's it, and he had a big concern there, because he could have eight or ten crews, that's at the main room we'd call it, he could have eight or ten crews, you know, around.
>
> [That he was supplying or that he was...?]
>
> Oh, he supplied, yes, he supplied what was in Indian Harbour, oh yes.
>
> [O.k. when you say, 'his', you mean that they were working (pause) he owned the boats and the traps and-]
>
> Oh, Jerrett owned the whole works.

[Were those men shipped or be on shares?]

Well, I'd think it, I couldn't say for definitly, I would say shipped.

[O.k., that's right, I've heard somebody say (pause) remember that C.A. Jerrett used to go up on a hill with a spy glass to watch his crews out, and I never understood why he'd do it if he was just supplying them, you know, then...?]

But if they're his own crew, you see. (Interview #5)[7]

The Jerretts chartered steamers to take crews to the Labrador from about 1890. On these steamers they took both their own crews (those fishing directly for them and some of the planters they supplied) as well as other planters and their crews. The planters, and their crews and gear, were taken down and back for a charge based on the amount of fish they caught during the summer, the charge being 20 cents a quintal in 1899 (Smith 1936:99) and 25 cents in 1905 (JHA v. 20 n. 1 1905:268), equalling about 5 per cent on the gross production of the voyage. From at least 1907 C.A. Jerrett was shipping dried cod directly from the Labrador coast to foreign markets.

Capt. William Bartlett worked out of Turnavick near the northern limit of the Labrador stationer fishery. The Bartlett fishing station at Turnavik had been in existence from at least the 1870s and by the early twentieth century Capt. William Bartlett employed about 150 persons (mostly working on shares) fishing over five to six miles of coast and would have utilized about 30 cod traps (JHA v. 20 n. 1 1905:237-38, R. Bartlett 1928:43). As was mentioned above the Bartletts

[7] Statements in brackets are interviewer's questions.

shipped their crews to the Labrador by steamer from the year 1874. They also left men on the Labrador Coast to secure cod trap berths for following year, so it is clear that it was not their use of steamers which gave them any advantage in this respect (JHA v. 20 n. 1 1905:237). The Bartletts were also involved in the supply business, though to what extent is unclear. Abraham Bartlett seems to have been exporting Labrador fish from the coast in the 1870s in their steamer the *Panther*, well before it became the regular practice (Board of Trade 99, Agreements and Crew Lists, series 2; 1874). However, there is no record of them exporting any fish directly from the Labrador coast after about 1890. William Bartlett seems to have been insolvent by 1925 when Captain Robert Bartlett (William's son) bought the property (for very little) from the supplying merchants and receivers of the insolvent estate (R. Bartlett 1934:7-8). Robert Bartlett operated the station for the 1925 season after which it seems to have passed out of the family's hands. It seems that a series of poor seasons and poor prices along with difficulties in getting crews for the station were the causes of this (R. Bartlett 1934:7-8).

Most of the large scale supplying for the Brigus Labrador fishery in this period was done from St. John's by the large merchant houses of that city. Until The Bank Crash of 1894, much, probably most, of that business was carried on on a credit basis, with the accounts of planters, even large ones, being carried over from year to year. The large, usually St. John's, merchant firms also served as the planters' bankers. On large expenditures the planters would write out bills on their merchant houses and if cash was necessary it could be drawn upon from

the merchant houses (R. Bartlett 1928:99-101).

With the The Bank Crash of 1894, however, this changed to a large extent with many of the merchant firms failing and those remaining limiting, at least as much as possible, the credit-supply-business (Neis 1980:84). Nevertheless, for Brigus, much of the supplies for the Labrador fishery, especially that for the larger planters, continued to come from St. John's. What exactly was meant when it was stated that there was an ending or limiting of the credit system of fishery supplies is far from clear. It is clear, however, that most fishermen continued to get their supplies for the Labrador cod fishery on credit, and those fishermen who supplied themselves through cash payments continued to be a distinct minority (see Interviews 1-5, and Smith 1936). Even by the 1920s and 1930s the fishery was overwhelmingly carried out on credit relationships, though many of the merchants would seem to have preferred that it were a cash system, as exemplified by A.B. Perlin, speaking in the early 1930s:

> A.B. Perlin: Take my firm today. We do probably the most conservative business as regards credit in this country and still we have lost a great deal more than we have made.
>
> Q.: On credit business?
>
> A.B. Perlin: It is a credit business. We cannot do the other kind....
>
> Q.: The people regard your house as being a cash house.
>
> A.B. Perlin: It would be a great deal better off if it had been a cash house. (*C.A. Magrath Papers*, evidence of A.B. Perlin)

The same applied to the merchant houses of Brigus where, at least in the 1920s and 1930s, "It was all credit" (Interview #1).

It seems that the change in the nature of the credit-supply system which took place after the 1894 Bank Crash was that merchants would supply, on a credit basis, only those fishermen with "...proper fishing property, or who [could] contribute something to fitting himself out." (Gosling to Morris, January 12, 1914 in *Board of Trade Letter Book*, cited in McDonald 1971:12). Conversely the planters were unwilling to leave large accounts with the merchant houses and began to make use of the Canadian banks which came to dominate Newfoundland banking after the crash of 1894 and which began to establish branches in the outports at the same time (Innis 1954:462).

At least in Brigus, this meant that there was a gradual decrease in the number of crews supplied and that those remaining crews were ones with a good record with their merchants:

> [H]e (J.W. Hiscock) was gradually cutting down, because it was, as I said before, it was a dying business but any of his old, reliable crews and what not that wanted to go to Labrador, he would supply them, and looked after them.... (Interview #2).

> [A]ny good fellow he had no trouble to get a fit out in the spring of the year, but the fellow that didn't do good, he couldn't do it at all.... (Interview #6).

Sometime around 1905 the more purely mercantile merchant house of J.W. Hiscock arose in Brigus, with their Labrador operations based in the Smokey area on the North side of Grosswater Bay. The J.W. Hiscock firm operated like a number of other supplying merchants from neighboring communities (eg. Avondale, Port-de-Grave, Bay Roberts, etc.), many of whom also supplied crews from

Labrador premises in the same area as the Hiscocks. All of these firms concentrated their efforts in mercantile activity rather than the direct production of dried cod.

Captain Edmund Hiscock, the father of J.W. Hiscock, is reported by Smith (1936:80) to have been a planter at Holton in 1896 and having "...a cod seine and three cod traps, also four *bulleys* or large boats with gaff sails, expressly for fishing after the trapping was over." Captain Hiscock may very well have also supplied on a small scale and purchased dried cod whereever he could at this time. Later, Smith (1936:94-95) refers to him as a merchant. Sometime around 1905 he seems to have divided his property among his two sons, giving each one of his two schooners, J.W. Hiscock his property at Comfort Bight, and bis brother that at Holton.

In 1887 John Munn & Co. of Harbour Grace began to export dried cod directly from the Labrador coast to the foreign markets and shortly after that the large St. John's merchant firms followed suit (Smith 1936 17-18). By the first decade of the twentieth century J.W. Hiscock and company, as well as many of the other Conception Bay merchant firms, were also exporting dried cod directly from the coast, by steamships or sailing vessels, rather than through St. John's and its merchant firms as they had done previously. In 1907 J.W. Hiscock exported 3,300 quintals from Comfort Bight by a sailing vessel, a quite small scale of exporting as compared to C. & A. Dawe, exporting 75,458 quintals from the coast and Baine Johnstone exporting 32,167 quintals, the two largest exporters of fish from the Labrador.[8] The export of fish directly from Labrador, with

[8] The exports of dried cod from the coast of Labrador are, at best, only a very rough

the rush to fill chartered steamers and to be the first to the foreign markets, led to keen competition for fish, with firms paying bonuses over the current price, or accepting fish which they might otherwise have rejected due to poor quality (Smith 1936:17-18, 128-29, Grenfell 1909:317, *Reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries 1894*:56-57).

In about 1906 J.W. Hiscock bought a room at Smokey, under an arrangement similar to that employed in the nineteenth century by planters for financing schooners (see Chapter 2). Under this arrangement the property at Smokey stayed in J.W. Hiscock's supplying merchant's name, Harvey & Co., until the money advanced by the suppliers had been paid off, in, it would seem, fish (Interview # 1 and *Reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries* 1907). The Hiscocks' had one crew fishing for them from this room. From the beginning, however, the firm seems to have secured essentially all of their dried cod through mercantile activity rather than by direct production. In this they differed from the other large Brigus merchant-planters, such as the Jerretts and the Bartletts, who seem to have obtained at least half of their dried fish exports from the production of those crews working directly for them (i.e. with crews made up entirely of members employed directly by them):

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indication of the size the merchant houses. While J.W. Hiscock was involved entirely in the Labrador stationer fishery, firms such as Baine Johnstone, Job Bros., and Munn & Co. were involved in all aspects of the fishery as well as the supplying of firms such as the J.W. Hiscock. Firms such as J.W. Hiscock's also sold some, and at times all, of their dried cod to the major exporters.

> Jerrett was the biggest one that was in Indian Harbour, which, I'd say he was the biggest on the coast, for crews. Now Hiscock might have supplied a lot of crews, you know, but quite likely did, quite a lot, but Jerrett had them their own, like, on the main room, and then there'd be, probably, eight or ten more, there on their own. (Interview #5)

The primary function of J.W. Hiscocks' room was mercantile, i.e. the delivery of supplies and salt, the collection of fish, the organization of transport, etc., rather than the direct production of dried cod. As a result of this the crew on the main room always worked on set wages, with a production bonus on the fish they directly produced, rather than on shares. Shares were not a suitable form of wages on the room because much of their time was taken up with mercantile work (i.e. delivering supplies, loading vessels, etc.) and mercantile work could not readily be paid in shares.

By 1912 J.W. Hiscock was exporting on average between eleven and twelve thousand quintals of dried cod from the coast of Labrador annually and had become one of the largest firms doing so. From 1913 to 1917 the firm continued to support about the same level of exports from the Labrador coast, during a period of substantial rises in the price of cod, and by 1917 they were the second largest exporter of cod from the Labrador coast. In 1917 J.W. Hiscock moved the firm to St. John's and between then and the mid-1920s the firm reached its maxima in the Labrador fishery, exporting 24,800 quintals of cod in 1921 and 38,880 quintals in 1922, and had something over fifty *salt accounts*.[9]

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[9] In general salt accounts represented a fishing crew being supplied by a merchant for all of the necessary summer fishing supplies, however, some of the accounts were for Labrador *natives* (i.e. residents, not necessarily or usually Innu or Inuit), who fished in a small way mostly for their own use, and a few others were of independent planters who supplied themselves on a cash basis for all their supplies except for salt (see Interviews #1

After these peak years the exports of fish by J.W. Hiscock dropped off dramatically and the firm started to limit their supply business. In the period around 1930 the firm, along with most of the other Labrador merchants, cut back on the amount of fish they shipped direct from the Labrador coast, sending a larger percentage of their fish to St. John's, where they sold it to the larger export firms based there. By 1933 the Hiscocks stopped shipping directly from the coast (see *Reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries* 1925-32). They were down to supplying about twelve crews and the numbers they supplied continued to decline thereafter.[10] In 1933, in the depth of the depression and with the price and markets for dried cod almost down to nothing, J.W. Hiscock moved back to Brigus and carried on the business from there on the following basis:

> For example, we had two small schooners. Father (J.W. Hiscock) would take, he would generally, that would be the average load, two small schooners, he would take one of them and he would sell immediately, to pay off his crews. The other schooner load of fish he'd hold and he'd gamble, wondering if it was going to go up, down, probably he'd settle so many hundred quintals at a certain sale, you know. He wouldn't, probably, sell it all at once, he was just (pause) of course he was through with it more or less, but that was the custom then, and how we happened to come back to Brigus, he had the idea that we'd (pause) that he'd still carry on the same principal, but he thought it would be a good idea to build a store, a small store, and store one load of fish as well as pack it and what not, sell the other one direct to anybody that was interested in it.

The J.W. Hiscock firm seems to have operated much as did the other fish

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and #6).

[10] The firm continued, however, after the Second World War by buying fish from around the Island of Newfoundland. The firm continues to exist at present.

merchants from around Conception Bay supplying for the Labrador fishery. These firms differed from the larger St. John's merchants in that they were not generally involved in the import and wholesale aspects of the trade, though they were involved, at times, in the export of dried cod and they were always involved in supplying for the fishery and in purchasing fish from the fishermen. J.W. Hiscock, while from Brigus, supplied a particular area on the Labrador rather than the home community (though there were crews from Brigus fishing there as well):

> You would think probably that we would supply the people from Brigus, but that isn't necessarily so. We supplied the people that fished in our area on the Labrador. They came from Kingston to Conception Harbour and probably some on the Labrador. (Interview #2)

The firm was initially supplied by the firm of Harvey & Co., and later by A.E. Hickman & Co., both of St. John's. After ascertaining the number of crews they would be supplying for the Labrador fishery, J.W. Hiscock would get the necessary supplies from their supplying merchant in St. John's on credit, to be paid at the end of the season in fish or cash. Some of the supplies would be delivered to the planters and their crews at Brigus or Carbonear. Most of the supplies, however, would be delivered to the crews on the Labrador.

On the Labrador the gear necessary for the summer fishery would be delivered along with the salt necessary for curing the fish caught. The Hiscocks' store, along with those of other merchants, on the Labrador also served as a general store for supplies. The delivery of the fish would be taken on the Labrador by the Hiscocks and the price paid, whether to their own crews or those

independent of them, was the *current price*, though a bonus over current price might be paid to, for example, secure the fish necessary to finish loading a steamer. The planters and their crews would be paid with a check or cash if there was a balance due to them (which there usually was, especially to the crew), "Yes, the merchant would give you a cheque, or sometimes he'd pay you in cash." (Interview #4). In October or November they would settle up with their crews and supplying merchant.

Many (see E. Antler 1981, S. Antler 1975, Sider 1986) have viewed the essence of merchant profits and control as originating in their ability to manipulate the price they paid the fishing families for the dried cod which they produced as well as in the sale of the fishing supplies and necessaries to the fishing families, in a system labelled *the truck system* (S. Antler 1975:42-43). As was mentioned in Chapter 2, seemingly, the only concerted attempt by the merchants around Conception Bay to impose truck proper (i.e. the payment of wages in goods) was attempted in 1830 and was defeated by concerted political action by the fishing servants at that time. In the period dealt with in this chapter the Conception Bay merchants operating in the Labrador fishery, of whom J.W. Hiscock is an example, do not seem to have ever systematically applied anything like the *truck system*:

> [O.K. So when you were supplying you would be making a profit both off what you were supplying and (pause) off the fish business, selling fish, exporting fish. Which half did most of the profit come from?]
>
> Oh, the fish. Now there was in places (pause) in my time, it was different here now, further north in Newfoundland, fishermen (pause) I've heard of it, I was rather surprised, that they never saw a dollar, it.

> was all a barter business. But here (pause) probably it would be here on the Avalon and in the near area, they were paid off with a cheque in the fall of the year, they could do what they liked with it and what not (pause) go where they would and (pause) you know. But in other cases I have heard of them, where the planterman or the shareman really never saw a dollar, it was all barter. (Interview #1)

While the crews which were supplied by merchants such as J.W. Hiscock generally operated under the standard shipping papers, delivering all of their fish to their supplying merchant, the operation of current price insured that they would still receive approximately the same price as was being received by independent planters for their fish. Any planters who were in debt to their merchant for more than the value of his season's production was, in theory, obligated to ship all of his fish to his supplying merchant. In practice, however, the merchants found it nearly impossible to enforce this in a situation where there were independent planters selling their fish and merchants willing to buy fish with no questions asked:

> If I couldn't buy my supplies in the spring of the year, I'd go to you and you'd give me everything, now I had to sign my name then that I'd give you my fish.
>
> [I see, did anybody ever try to get around that, sell a little fish for cash to other people if they could, or (pause)?]
>
> My, I've sold, I've sold hundreds of quintals.... We did, lots or times, we'd, now with the fish all gone, and when we'd go down in the morning, the stage would be half full, again. Perhaps forty quintals, twenty quintals, what ever he could get away with, see.
>
> [Oh I see.]
>
> And we'd go home and sell that.
>
> [I see, so he'd sell it to you or would you sell it for him?]

> Oh no, we'd go on over and sell it and it would be, he'd [a merchant] give us the receipts, and our (inaudible) would actually give it to the other fellow. (Interview #8)[11]

Prices for dried cod and supplies were not adjustable on the individual level as prices paid for fish in the Labrador fishery were always current price. Merchants who attempted to pay less than current price when settling up in the fall would soon find that they had little or no dried cod in the following year, "If Mr. Munn had given more than $3.60 we would have given the same. It would have worked against us another year otherwise." (*The Mail and Advocate* July 12, 1015 evidence of James Rorke, Sr.). While current price was set by merchants as a whole, it could not be set by the individual merchant nor for the individual planter or servant so as to insure that the end of season balance was always in the merchant's favour.

Current price, in the early twentieth century was sometimes set by the major merchant firms in concert while at other times, especially when the price of cod was rising, it was set under competitive conditions:

> I am senior partner in the firm of James Rorke & Sons. Been doing business at Labrador for at least three generations. Personally I have had 52 years experience. Was engaged in the business last year - 1914.
>
> When first I went into the business there never was any question of the price of fish until the planters came home and began to settle up, then the price was settled by the large exporters of fish such as Ridley, Munn, Donnelly, Baine Johnston, Duder, Job. About 35 years ago there was some variation. At that time the merchants received a stipulated

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[11] The informant here was an independent planter who supplied himself on a cash basis.

> price for first cargoes that sailed, and it became the custom to pay the planters six pence a qtl. to induce them to ship their fish early in order to help load the first vessels. This continued only a few years. Since then there has been another change, and planters were promised the highest price when they were shipping their fish that was paid, that is that was paid by the general trade. At the time that delivery is taken of the fish at Labrador by the merchant the price is unknown by the merchant, he can only speculate or judge by the condition of the markets. As a rule the price is unknown till the middle to the last of October. Last year the price was settled earlier than usual, and before the usual data was known, and furthermore in addition to the absence of the usual data the extraordinary conditions arising from the war had to be taken into account. I don't know of my own knowledge how the price of fish was fixed last year. (*The Mail and Advocate* July 12, 1915 evidence of James Rorke, Sr. see also *The Mail and Advocate* July 3, 1915 evidence of Marmaduke Winter).

While prices for goods in Newfoundland were without doubt high compared to continental North America or Britain they were not set in a situation lacking any competition in the sale of goods nor were the planters and fishing servants tightly constrained in their ablity to make use of that competition, at least not around the Avalon Peninsula and in the other more heavily populated areas of the island.

The merchants working in the Labrador fishery from around Conception Bay, probably unlike the large St. John's merchant-wholesalers (who were in turn their suppliers), derived their profits primarily from the sale of dried cod rather than of supplies[12].

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12 While prices on the Labrador for food and other necessaries was doubtless high, the planters brought the vast majority of their summer supplies from the Island of Newfoundland with them.

> [O.K. So when you were supplying you would be making a profit both off what you were supplying and (pause) off the fish business (pause) selling fish, exporting fish, which half did most of the profit come from?]
>
> Oh, the fish. || But you did (pause) naturally, you're not going to sell supplies (pause) without a profit. If you could get a profit and of course the profit, as far I'm concerned, was the profit you made on your fish, if anything. (Interview #1)
>
> No, I never considered the profit to lie on the supply, it was the profit on the fish that I worked on. (Interview #2) (see also *The Mail and Advocate* July 3 and 9, 1915, "Current Price of Codfish - Lorenzo Noseworthy vs. William A. Munn - Supreme Court.")

All of these merchants, from those on the scale of Nicholas Smith to those the size of C.A. Jerrett and J.W. Hiscock were similar in that in operating as suppliers for the fishery they were in turn supplied by the large merchant-wholesalers such as Baine Johnstone, Job Bros., Harvey & Co., and A.E. Hickman & Co., all of St. John's. As well as supplying these smaller, outport merchants, the large firms were the formers' direct competitors both in the supply business and in purchasing dried cod from independent planters and from planters supplied by other merchants. The main difference in the economic relationships which the outport merchants had with the St. John's merchant-wholesalers and that which the planters had with those same merchant-wholesalers was that the merchant-merchant relationships were not governed by the law of current supply, meaning that a merchant supplying someone involved primarily in supplying direct producers was not a privileged creditor in cases of insolvency (see *Decisions... 1829-1845*:20-47).

B. The Planters.

The gradual demise of the planters' fishery in Brigus, and other areas of Conception Bay, which took place in the period from 1880 through the Second World War, was marked by two major events, the end of the sail sealing fleet (due in part to the introduction of steamers) and the subsequent Bank Crash of 1894. Both events took place within the context and were to a great extent the result of a general decline in the value of Newfoundland's two major traditional exports, dried cod and seal oils (see Alexander 1976:7-9).

The introduction of steamships into the sailing sealing fleet affected the planters of Brigus in a number of ways. Those planters who had been owners and captains of sailing sealers, generally the larger scale planters, found the main part of their capital, i.e. their vessels, obsolete, at least in the seal fishery itself and many did not recover from this setback (R. Bartlett 1928:99-101). Some of the planters, who had been the captains and owners of sail sealing vessels, became the captains of the steam sealers operating out of St. John's and Harbour Grace. Lacking the capital resources necessary to purchase a steamer, they became the employees of the merchant owners of these vessels. These captains received four per cent of net earnings of the sealing voyage and were responsible for all aspects of the sealing voyage beyond the supplying of vessel and crop,[13]

[13] "A crop is an advance of $9; but a sealer is charged with $12 to repay it, if any seals are brought in. Some men send the whole $9 home, others don't use it; and others buy tea, sugar, belt, sheath and knife, skin boots, oilskins, or tobacco." (R. Bartlett 1929:95-101), i.e. the sealers would not go into debt for the value of their crop when the returns of the voyage would not cover the cost of the crop.

i.e. hiring of the officers and crew, decisions about when and where the hunt would take place, etc. (R. Bartlett 1929:130). However, most of those planters who had been masters of sailing sealers either left the seal fishery altogether or joined the ranks of the common sealers.[14] The Bank Crash of 1894 and, more importantly for the Brigus planters, the failure of many of the large merchant firms (who served the function of the banks for many of the outport planters) which accompanied it was a further setback for the planters (R. Bartlett 1928:99-101, Lench 1925:16).

Despite these changes and setbacks, the Brigus planters remained capitalists, though often on a quite small scale.[15] They continued to own, control, and have an effective monopoly over the means of production, and remained dependent on hired labour for their production. As capitalists they are often difficult to separate from merchants both because some of the larger scale planters continued to serve as suppliers to other planters on the side and because the Brigus merchants continued to be involved in direct production and the point at which one or the other form of capitalist activity (i.e. direct production or mercantile activity) came to dominate is both unclear in most cases and, in any case, could vary from year to year.

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[14] There were never any more than 30 steamers in the seal fishery while there had been as many as 400 sailing vessels.

[15] As was characteristic of nineteenth century capitalism even in England, (see Samuel 1977).

An example of a larger scale planter, and one who was also involved in some mercantile activity, was Nicholas Smith. Smith started out as a shareman for a Brigus planter, fishing on the Labrador, at age 14. In his early twenties he was employed as the master of a small schooner, as a floater and in the coasting trade, for one of the larger planters of Brigus.[16] In return for taking the schooner to St. John's and then down to the Labrador with crews and supplies and, later, returning to Brigus , Smith had use of the schooner as a floater, supplying his own crew and gear (i.e. food, fishing equipment, etc.). In 1899 Smith started to go down to Cuthroat, Labrador, as a stationer, first hiring a room there and then purchasing one. In his first year there he operated with only two cod traps, but in his second he sewed up a third one and operated with a crew of eight men and two "girls". In his fourth year he added another trap and operated two crews of six men and a girl each.

Between 1899 and 1907 Smith was supplied by Job Bros. & Co., going each spring to St. John's to get his supplies and settling up with them there in the fall of the year. Not owning a schooner he sent his crews down to the Labrador and shipped his cod oil back to Newfoundland by the schooners and steamships chartered by G.C. Jerrett, "...the usual customs to be observed of paying twenty

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[16] The planter was George Smith (no relation to Nicholas Smith), the former merchant whose supplying business had failed in 1882, who had reentered the fish business in 1884 as a planter fishing with ten crews and two schooners at Edward's Harbour on the Labrador. In 1896 he went back into the supplying business after buying out the Indian Harbour property of Job Bros. which supplied about twenty crews, mostly from Brigus (Smith 1936:69-70).

cents per quintal as freight on all fish caught during the season, and also paying freight on all cod oil." (Smith 1936:99). During these same years Nicholas Smith also worked off and on as the master of schooners sent down to the Labrador by the different merchant houses and as a buyer of cod and cod oil for different merchant firms.

Though both as a planter and, later, as a small scale merchant Nicholas Smith was being supplied by Job Bros. & Co., he did not always, or even mostly, sell his cod and oil to them. Smith would sell his dried cod to whomsoever offered him the best price or, if *current price* was all that was offered, then to the merchant firm which was the most convenient for him. The fact that he had been supplied by Job Bros. & Co., on credit, and had been shipped down to the Labrador by C.A. Jerrett did not obligate him, by custom or by law, to sell his fish to either of them. An incident from 1905 illustrates this (Smith 1936:128-29):

> Mr. Kennedy from Avondale was loading a steamer at Kavanagh Tickle with 14,000 quintals of fish, and hearing that I had almost a thousand quintals on the bawn ready for shipping he sent his agent, another Mr. Kennedy, down to Cutthroat to know if I would sell. He offered me 20 cents per quintal over the current price or $4:00 [per quintal], and I was quite surprised at this offer, for Mr. Joh had told me in a recent letter that the price of fish would be no more than $3.50 off the coast.[17] I could not decide at once, and asked Mr. Kennedy to give me forty-eight hours' grace before deciding, but I told him that it was most probable I would accept his offer. In the meantime, I went to Smokey and saw Mr. Jerrett, and told him that Mr. Kennedy had offered me $4.00 per quintal. He replied, "I cannot pay you that, and I don't blame you for selling to the best bidder; I would do so myself."

[17] That is sold on the Labrador coast.

> [S]o I went to the [Marconi] Station and wired Mr. Job the information that I was offered $4.00 from Mr. Kennedy for my whole voyage. I received a wireless from Mr. Job advising me to accept Mr. Kennedy's offer, and also congratulating me on the first wireless message ever sent from Smokey.
>
> On the third day Mr. Kennedy came down again to know if I had decided to sell my fish, and I told him that I had decided to do so, with one provision. He asked me what it was and I replied, "Should the price of fish off the coast be $4.00 per quintal, are you prepared to pay me $20 over that price on my whole voyage?" After thinking a few minutes he said that it would be all right, and that he would do so.
>
> Mr. Kennedy congratulated us on our success and on the quality of the fish, and said to me, "Now, Smith, we have your fish, and you can have your money in gold or notes, which ever you prefer." I replied, "I don't want cash, sir, your cheque will do me just as well." He then gave me his cheque for nearly $4,000.00 for which I thanked him very much.[18]

In 1912, while continuing to operate with his own crews, Smith worked as a dealer for Job Bros, supplying seven crews (beside his own two) in the Cuthroat area. Sometime after the First World War he seems to have completely withdrawn from the supply business and he had retired altogether from the fishery by the 1930s.

Most of the Brigus planters were, however, not on the scale of Nicholas Smith and, in particular, were not involved on any significant scale of mercantile activity. Nonetheless they differed from Smith in size rather than kind. These planters were only involved in fishing, usually with only one crew of between five and ten members. These planters owned a room on the Labrador coast and

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[18] This also illustrates the competition which the merchants entered into in their attempts to load steamers for foreign markets quickly. Grenfell (1909:317) describes similar competition among buyers on the Labrador at about the same period, see also *Reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries* (1894:56-57).

most, if not all, of the fishing gear necessary to carry out the fishery. They were most commonly supplied by the local (i.e. as defined by the locality on the Labrador more than in terms of their home communities) merchants on credit, though some supplied themselves (i.e. paid for their supplies in cash), usually in St. John's. Many of these planters worked, as Smith did for a while, as crewmen in the seal fishery, going each spring to St. John's to obtain a berth. Others took on other jobs in the the winter and spring, either as employers, employees, or independently.

With the dying out of their seal fishery carried out in sailing vessels the Brigus planters seem to have increasingly come to channel their efforts and investment into the Labrador fishery. While a few of the planters used their sealing vessels in the coasting trade, more seem to have disposed of their sealing vessels, which they had used as floaters on the Labrador during the summer, and switched to stationing on the Labrador. As was outlined above, during the period when the number of floaters fishing on the Labrador from Brigus was in decline, i.e. from 1880, there was an increase in the amount of fish caught at the Labrador by Brigus planters operating as stationers.

This increase in the quantity of cod caught by the Brigus planters on the Labrador took place, however, in the context of a dramatic decrease in both the overall population of the community and the number of people in the community involved in fishing (both absolutely and relatively see Tables 13 and 16). This increase in labour productivity must be attributed to the introduction and rapid adoption of the cod trap by the planters of Brigus. While there were no cod

traps in Brigus in 1873, by 1883 there were 119, in 1890 there were 107, and by 1900 there were 142 all of which were used in the Labrador fishery. The rapid adoption of the cod trap in the Brigus, and Conception Bay, Labrador fishery can be taken as further evidence of the continued vitality of the planter fishery and counter-proof to the theory of demise of planters' fishery in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The cod trap was a new and necessary investment for the planters of Conception Bay who, finding their fishing-sealing schooners less and less profitable, could have been pushed out of the fishery by family fishing operations.[19] While the planters who had operated as floaters on the Labrador had always owned all aspects of the fishing operations, i.e. lines, boats, stages, etc., it was their access to schooners which was central to their position as capitalists. Other than the schooners necessary to get to and from the Labrador, the equipment for fishing on the Labrador, essentially the same equipment called for in the Newfoundland inshore fishery, was not very expensive and was well within the capital resources of a nuclear family, requiring no more than two or three persons for a crew using handlines.[20]

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[19] In wheat farming in North America, at about the same time, large scale capitalist farming was displaced by family based farms; the origins of this change can be found in certain technological changes along with access to land such that it became almost like fish, i.e. a common property resource (see Friedmann 1978).

[20] Because the method of curing fish on the Labrador (see below) did not require the constant attention necessary for shore cured, light-salted, dried cod (see E. Antler 1981:109-16, 137-44), the shore crew generally employed on the Labrador was minimal.

A Labrador schooner, on the other hand, was an investment which was beyond the capital resources of most families and was the lynch-pin which allowed the planters to operate as capitalists, i.e. to control the means of production. With the dying out of the profitablity of the Labrador schooners and the introduction of steamships for transportation to and from the Labrador coast, there was the possiblity of family based fishing crews, supplied by merchant firms and shipped there on their steamships, coming to dominate the Labrador stationer fishery (see JHA v.20, n.1 1905:223).

If there was the possiblity of the replacement of the overtly capitalist planter fishery by a family based one, and this does seem to have been at least a possiblity, then it would seem that the essentially fortuitous introduction of the cod trap served to arrest such a replacement, to ensure the continued dominance of the Labrador stationer fishery by planters, and to allow that fishery to remain essentially and overtly capitalist. There were three attributes of the cod trap which served to reinforce the planters' fishery at the Labrador. First, the cost of a cod trap, while not quite as expensive as a new schooner, was still a considerable investment. The price of a new cod trap was between three and four hundred dollars and stayed that way from its invention through the Second World War. The account book of a merchant from Brigus (*G.C. Jerrett Account Book*) lists the price of a new cod trap in 1882 as 80 pounds, which would be equivalent to $320. Durgin (1908:26) reports the price of a cod trap as $400 in 1905, and Junek (1937:28) reports it to be between three and four hundred dollars in the 1930s (though before the Great Depression the price seems to have risen to about

$1000, see R. Bartlett 1934:15). Comparatively, the average wage of a *shipped* (i.e. on set wages) crewman was $100, while a crewman paid in shares would receive around $200 (if cod was fetching $4.00 per quintal and his share equaled 50 quintals of dried cod) in a good summer. Neis (1980:39) places the price of a new cod trap as similar to that of a small used schooner. The costs involved in operation of a cod trap fishery were further increased as the average crew seems to have taken two cod traps down to the Labrador as insurance against the possible loss of a trap or a poor run of fish (see Smith 1936).

Second, the cod trap demanded a larger crew than was necessary for a crew using hand-lines exclusively (Ryan 1971:112-3 and, in a slightly different situation, Britan 1974:43-4). To handle a cod trap required a crew of at least four persons and the average fishing crews, *using* only one trap while the fish were running, were composed of at least six or seven men and, usually, a *girl* to handle the cooking and cleaning tasks on shore. As such the cod trap would have strained the human resources of fishing crews based on the nuclear or extended family. This would have been especially the case in the area of study as there was little if any tradition of crews based on the extended family in the Brigus Labrador stationer fishery. On the other hand fishing crews based on, essentially, capitalist relations of production (the traditional organization of the Brigus Labrador floater and seal fisheries) did not need to be significantly adjusted to adapt to the Labrador stationer fishery using cod traps.

Third, the increased yields which the cod trap produced meant that the wages which a fisherman could expect from working for a planter using a cod

trap would at least be competitive with what he could expect when working on his own with hook and line and the risks involved would be considerably reduced. In a good season at the Labrador a fishing crew using handlines, operating in partnership, could expect to produce between 50 and 60 quintals of dried cod per fishing crew member. While each of the crew members would receive a full share (i.e. 50 to 60 quintals), from that each would have to pay their share of the expenses of the summer's fishing voyage (fishing gear, which would be less than for a trap crew; food; salt; travel down to the Labrador; etc.), as well as taking the risk of not making enough from the fish to cover the cost of their outfit for the fishery. On the other hand, a good season for a cod trap crew would produce around 100 quintals per crew man, of which the price paid for half of which (i.e. 50 quintals) would go to each of the members of the fishing crew. Unlike the crew working as partners, however, the expenses of the summer fishing voyage were the responsiblity of the planter rather than of the crew. If the crew members had been hired on set wages (i.e. if they were *shipped*) then they would be paid regardless of the profitablity of the summer voyage, and if the crew members were hired on shares then they would at least not be responsible for any expenses, beyond their small personal outfit, their *crop*,[21] and they would not be responsible even for that if the voyage was a complete failure.

The ultimate demise of the planters' fishery of Brigus (i.e. the Labrador

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[21] The crop, or *crap*, supplied in the Labrador fishery seems to have followed the same pattern as that employed in the seal fishery (see above).

fishery), was not marked by its replacement by a family based fishery in which "...each fisherman contracts with the merchant individually for supplies at the start of the season, and settles up individually with the merchant at the end of the season. (S. Antler 1975:44-46, see also, E. Antler 1981:44-48, 100, 117-21). Highlighting this is that in the depression of the 1930s there was a temporary change to relations of production which were similar to that assigned to the family fishery:

> Oh no, no, no, no, it was all one account, it was all one account. The old, the owner, or the planter, he would be charged up with the salt and what not, but he got half the voyage, as you know, and then he got his share of the other half. That was the old time sharing (pause) thing, but when things got very, very bad, for a few years, they changed that system. It was one of our fishermen's idea, because they were getting nothing at all, while the sharemen were getting (pause) comparatively good, comparatively better than the certain (inaudible), but it was nothing just the same, but then they supplied with a company account. There was a share, there was a company account, every thing that was used during the voyage, for the fishing say, was charged to the company account, such as gasoline and what not, and I think lines and and jiggers, they were also charged there, but not his trap twine, that went to the, that was his personal responsiblity, because he got a, he got a share for that, and then, what was left over, they all shared equally, you know.
>
> [So that the skipper didn't have to take the loss.]
>
> He didn't didn't have to take the loss as he, as he did before, because that was what was happening. A lot of those skippermen would come home and then, well the sharemen would have a scant few dollars left, you know. What could you expect to have for a few dollars? (Interview #2).

However, this change, which took place in the mid-1930s was both extraordinary and temporary, disappearing with the rise in prices which took place towards the end of the 1930s and the start of the Second World War.

The ultimate demise of the Labrador fishery carried out from Brigus (i.e. the planters' fishery), and from other areas of Conception Bay, was caused by the difficulty the fishery faced in competing for labour with other employments outside the fishery and, more importantly, outside of Newfoundland, in the growing economies of mainland North America. Robert Bartlett (1934:7-8) mentions his father's difficulty in getting crews for the Bartlett fishing station in the 1920s and, with the end of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the opening up of jobs outside the fishery the Labrador fishery dropped off dramatically (see Interview #s 1,2,4,5, and 6). While during the depression of the 1930s there was a slight revival in the Labrador fishery, the revival was not due to any improvement in prices for cod (on the contrary cod reached record lows of $1.50 per quintal), but instead, it was a result of the cutting off of avenues of emigration due to the depression and the lack of alternative employment in Newfoundland.

C. The Fishing Servants.

In the Brigus Labrador fishery the majority of work continued to be done by hired labour, whether the hire was for set wages or for a share of the catch; the forms of contract remained as they had been in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the decline of the seal fishery carried out from Brigus, the introduction of steamers into the seal fishery and its shift to St. John's, and the general depression in the price of dried cod, brought significant changes in work conditions for the labouring classes of Brigus.

The disappearance of the sailing sealing fleet affected the fishing servants of

Brigus in a number of ways. While many sealers who had served as crewmen on the Brigus sailing seal vessels journeyed each spring to St. John's for *berths* on the steam sealers, the condition of their work changed in a number of important respects. The steamers brought a sharp decrease in the number of sealing berths, they continued to decrease through the Second World War. With this decrease in sealing berths the competition intensified among sealers for them. Because of this, and because of the increased productivity of the steamers, the merchant owners of the steamers could increase their share of catch from the one half, which had been the share scheme in place on the sailing vessels, to two thirds on the steamers (see Ryan 1971:22-5). The increased competition for sealing berths also seems to have allowed the owners to increase the fees for berths. On board the steamers, the gunners—sealers who provided their own sealing guns and traditionally did not pay for their berths—also seem to have disappeared.

The demise of the Brigus seal fishery also meant that ancillary employments which the seal fishery had provided in the community, such as longshore work, vessel construction and repair, coopering, the manufacture of seal oil, and the cleaning of seal skins, were either cut back drastically or disappeared altogether (L. Chafe 1924:16; Ryan 1971:22-5, 55). As a result of these changes the fishing servants, like the planters, were forced to depend more on their returns from the summer Labrador cod fishery. Unlike the planters, however, there was little they could do to increase those returns.

The response of the Brigus working class was emigration. This emigration in search of employment was either on a temporary basis, to work on the railway,

at the Bell Island iron mines, to the mine at Buchans, or to St. John's (especially women), or, increasingly, on a permanent basis, to the United States or Canada. The rapid drop in population which ensued began sometime around the year 1880. Emigration from Brigus at this time seems to have been led by the exodus of those who had been the workers in the seal and Labrador fisheries, with proof for this coming from the pattern of population change. The pattern of emigration from Brigus was unlike that of the outport emigration described by Herrick (n.d.:22), in which females emigrate at a higher rate than males and, as a result of which, there is an excess of males to females in the home communities. The emigrants from Brigus seem to have been more often young males than females. This pattern is evident in the excess numbers of females to males in the censi from 1869 onwards and in the rapid decline in the population of working age males between the 1884 and 1891 censi, representing, if we assume a rate of natural increase of one per cent per annum (from Staveley 1977:68), a rate of emigration of between five and six per cent per annum for this group (see Table 17).

Evidence, at least, suggesting that a disproportionate number of emigrants were former fishery servants rather than planters is to be found in comparing the population of Brigus and the numbers engaged in the fisheries with the number of cod traps (see Table 16). Both the population of the community as a whole and the numbers engaged in the fisheries were decreasing in this period. The numbers of cod traps, on the other hand, were increasing, rapidly (and, therefore, the ratio of persons involved in the fishery to the number of cod traps was decreasing) and

the ratio was markedly lower than the ratio for the rest of Newfoundland. If the planters had been the largest group of emigrants then one would expect that, as the owners of cod traps, the number of traps would not have risen so rapidly and that the ratio of cod traps to people engaged in the fishery would also not have decreased so rapidly nor been so much lower than the national average.

In the Preface to the 1891 Newfoundland Census it is stated by Robert Bond (later Sir), then Colonial Secretary, that,

> It will be noticed that in many of the Districts the increase has been small whilst in a few there has been a decrease. This may be accounted for by the large inducements held out to artisans and labourers in the United States.

Further evidence can be found in R. Bartlett (1934:7-8), who gives as one reason for the failure of his father's (William Bartlett's) fishing operation at Turnavick, the Bartletts' difficulty in finding crews for the station. The destination of emigrants from Brigus, seems mostly to have been the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. When Nicholas Smith visited Boston in 1919 he reports meeting with many people who had emigrated to there from Brigus (1936:179-80).

The relative, in the North American context, underdevelopment and corresponding low wage rates in Newfoundland was the underlying cause of the emigration from Newfoundland which marked the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Alexander 1976:7). These conditions, however, were characteristic of Newfoundland as a whole and cannot, in themselves, explain the relatively higher rates of emigration from Brigus and the district of Port-de-Grave (as well as the districts of Harbour Grace and Carbonear). The reason for the relatively greater

tendency of workers from these districts to emigrate to find wage work in the United States is probably to be found in the greater concentration of wage labourers in those districts and the greater degree to which overtly capitalist relations of production dominated. As such workers from these districts, lacking any significant capital investments in the fishery and being habituated to the discipline of wage labour (see below), probably found leaving the fishery and adapting to the working conditions found on the United States Eastern seaboard much easier than would have been the case if they had been independent small producers.

For those who remained in Brigus and the Labrador fishery the conditions of work and relations of production remained much the same as they had before. Those working for the planters in the fishery were still, at least in the courts (see *Decisions... 1884-1896* 1897:99-103; *Decisions... 1897-1903.* 1905:20-30 *Decisions... 1904-1911.* 1912:165-68), referred to as *fishing servants*, though in popular usage the term *servant* was often used to distinguish those working on set wages from those working on shares (see Smith 1936:44). Payment of fishing servants continued to be in the form of *set wages*, *shares*, or *shipped shares*, as had been described in Chapter 2.[22]

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[22] Sir Wilfred Grenfell (1909:310-11) reported that, "The shareman in this country usually agrees for "half his hand." That is, the catch is divided by the number of men, including the owner or planter, and each shareman gets half a share. He has no expenses except clothing. Often the planter cannot, however, obtain men on these terms, and is obliged to take a full-share man. These men feed and clothe themselves and provide their own salt, but take a full share of fish." I have found no other reports of this practice for the Labrador fishery carried out from Conception Bay. At best it was very rare because if it took place to any significant extent there would have been very little reason for the planters to operate, with no return to them for either their capital nor for the risks they took in taking out supplies.

The decline of the Labrador floater fishery, the introduction of the cod trap, and the generally low prices for dried cod which marked this period, nonetheless, had some affects on the conditions of work in the Labrador fishery, especially for women. While the conditions of work in the Labrador floater and stationer fisheries were very similar for the fishermen, there was a decline in the specialized shore crews as a result of the introduction of the cod trap (see above) while the decline and later disappearance of the floaters, who traditionally brought their fish back to Newfoundland to be dried, resulted in the eventual disappearance of those work units which had dried the floaters' fish on their return to Brigus. Much of this work had been done by women and by, at least, the 1920s women's direct work in the fishery seems to have mostly been confined to working as cooks on the Labrador, work which did not entail working at curing the fish.

> [Oh yea, did they only cook and such or did they, or were they also expected to help making the fish?]
>
> No, all they were shipped for was to cook, but some of them were just the same as a man because, all hands were alike at that time and when they, when the men would go in the stage and they'd go too.
>
> [I see, but even though they did that they never went on shares, did they?]
>
> No they didn't. No, well, without the skipper giving them a few dollars after.
>
> [I see. Do you think they, would they have preferred to go on shares, do you think or (pause)?]
>
> Well I dare say they would, ha.
>
> [Yea but they wouldn't, couldn't do it, uh?]
>
> Well, at that time, I don't know, it was like all a woman was a woman,

and now, of course, they, half of the fellows going now, they want the women to work.' (Interview #6)

[And what about if he had a girl cooking, she'd go on shares or wages?]

No, he was responsible to pay her wages, generally. In my opinion all the girls were wages, but it could be because lots of (pause) lots of women went to Labrador years ago, I'll tell you they were as good in the stages (pause) as a man. I had a cook, I remember, one year myself that, oh, every chance she'd get, if the fish was plentiful and the boys were busy at the stage, well, she says, 'If I didn't have to get mug-up,' she said, 'I'd go down to the stage and give them a lift,' and I said, I'll get mug-up.' Well, she said, 'You give me your rubber clothes and long rubbers,' she says, 'I'll go, you can get mug-up.' That happened more than once, but not every girl. It depended on the (pause) you know, they weren't obliged to do it (pause), but that was her glory. (Interview #1)[23]

While the character of working relations between the fishing servants and their skipper, usually the planter, in the era before the twentieth century is generally undocumented, the nature of those relations, as existed in the Brigus Labrador fishery, are available for this century and, as the relations of production remained the same, it can be reasonably assumed that they were similar to those that existed previously.

The character of the working relations for the family based or *traditional* Newfoundland fishery which has been presented in much of the anthropological literature is essentially non-authoritarian, egalitarian, and non-hierarchical between skipper and crew (Britan 1971:48-44; Faris 1972:104-05; and Nemec

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[23] In the case of women cooks, payment in set wages indicates that they were not treated as full fledged members of the fishing crew.

1980:330-36). Faris (1972:104-05), in describing the organization of fishing crews on the north-east coast of Newfoundland writes:

> The status of skipper carries no real authority, however, no matter who fills the position. This has, in fact, caused considerable difficulty in certain circumstances where there had been the necessity to make a binding decision, and the avoidance of overt leadership has made even the most rudimentary decision-making a problem.... The times that I was out with them, it was usually the less accomplished and inexperienced shareman who decided such basic issues as when to haul (the cod traps) and when to come in, even though he, being an outsider, was much less familiar with the fishing grounds and took only a shareman's part of the voyage.

The general character of the relations between the planter-skipper and his crewmen in the Brigus Labrador fishery was, on the contrary, quite explicitly hierachical and authoritarian:

> He was skipper yes, oh, yes. I couldn't have (pause) if I said to Llwelyn [the planter], "Well now come on and put our traps out." No, I couldn't say that. If anything happened, it'd be my fault. Skipperman had all the say.

> I was down [to Labrador], I was twenty summers I suppose. Down, that's in Sandy Islands. I was four summers in Sandy Islands altogether. Down Horse Harbour, Emily Harbour, [inaudible] Tickle. Yes I was with all them skippermen. I was four summers with some, two summers, and some I wouldn't go with them at all, they was too cranky. (MUNFLA, Ms., 76-128)

> [O.k.; and would you, if you were a skipper man would you, you'd end up knowing, like, you wouldn't hire just anybody you'd have to, would you know them before you'd want to take them with you, either shipped or shares?]
>
> No, no, I wouldn't want to know.[24]

[24] *Want* is being used here, as it commonly is in Newfoundland, in the sense of to need, rather than to desire. In fact most of this man's crew were men he did know.

[No?]

No, and if he wasn't satisfactory you could get rid of him.

[O.k. or {do} anything you told him {a shareman} to do.]

Or anything you told him to do. Without, no, no, there was certain stuff that you couldn't put him, you couldn't force him. But now, with a shipped man, it's different, see. He'd have to do it and if once he disobeyed you, that was it.

[O.K. so a shipped man, if he, if you shipped him from the first of May, you could tell him to, you know, go dig your potatoes or something or eh?]

Yes, oh, he could, he's got to, you could have him there every day, and if he didn't go with you every day you could make up his wages, ten cents, or what ever it might be and deduct that from his wages. If you told him to come and he wouldn't go, you understand, you could deduct his day pay, take it from him. (Interview #4)

While the tenor of the individual relations which existed in any particular crew obviously varied with the individuals involved, and without doubt many crews worked without any overt displays of authority, fundamentally the relation between the skipper-planter and his crew was that of employer and employee.

-Chapter Five-
CONCLUSION

The British fishery at Newfoundland was from its beginnings essentially capitalist. Before 1610 it was an entirely migratory fishery and Newfoundland simply a fishing station, with the supply and export stages of production, and the recruitment of fishing crews were carried on from Europe. Under these conditions economic relations which existed between the suppliers of the voyage, the owner-operators of the fishing ships, and their employees were governed by British maritime law. In particular, mortgages given for the necessities for the voyage were given either under bonds of *bottomry* or of *respandentia*, while the payment of the crews' wages was in shares, rather than set wages, and were secured by *maritime lien*.

The seventeenth century saw the growth of a resident fishery. The actual production of dried cod was now carried out by the *inhabitants* or *planters*, *bye boat keepers*, as well as the continued involvement of the *fishing ships*. The trade in fish at Newfoundland (i.e. export), was conducted by *Sack ships*, *fishing ships*, traders from the American colonies of Britain, and resident merchants. The suppliers of the trade were merchants in England who supplied the fishing ships and the bye boat keepers. The fishing ships in turn supplied the inhabitants as did merchants residing in Newfoundland. By the first quarter of the eighteenth century the traditional ship fishery (i.e. where the ships were involved primarily in fishing rather than trade at Newfoundland) had virtually died out, having shifted most of their efforts to supply and export. Despite these changes, the economic

relations existing in the fishery continued to be based on British maritime law, as they had been in the previous century and which would continue to be characteristic of the Newfoundland fishery through to the twentieth century.

The three classes which dominated the Newfoundland fishery economy, at least during this period, were merchants, labourers, and planters. Most of those fishing were labourers, workers owning little more in the production process than their personal effects. The merchants were merchant capitalists involved primarily in trade in supplies and fish rather than being capitalists directly involved in producing dried cod. Planters, it is the argument of this thesis, are best classified as small capitalist, *petit bourgeoise* in the mold of the class of small producers which, at least in terms of numbers of people, dominated industrial production in the Western world through to at least the mid-nineteenth century.

Conception Bay and Brigus were the site of the earliest English settlement at Newfoundland and their pattern of settlement and growth are nearly synonymous with the English settlement at Newfoundland.

The period from 1750 to 1870 was one marked by growth and prosperity for Newfoundland and Conception Bay. In this period the resident fishery came to dominate the fishery while the cod and seal fisheries were the central and predominant activities for virtually all of the island. For much of the period, in particular from 1750 to 1830, Conception Bay was the centre of much of the island's economic growth and in the early part of the nineteenth century it even surpassed St. John's in economic importance and population.

For Conception Bay the beginning of the steady rise in population, which continued past the mid-point of the nineteenth century, began in the years from 1750 to 1755. In the beginning the resource base upon which this growth was based was the cod fishery on the *French Shore*. Later the Labrador fishery was opened up and at the end of the eighteenth century a spring seal-fishery, which complemented the Labrador fishery, was developed.

This growth in population involved a continuing shift from a migratory to resident use of the island's resources by merchants and labourers and a general rise in the number, power, and importance of the planters. The cause of the growth, both absolute and relative, in the resident fishery was an increase in the availablity and a decrease in the price of supplies started to be supplied from south-west of Ireland and, especially, from New England. These new sources of provisions along with famine and economic recession in Ireland, the prime source of labourers since the seventeenth century, made it easier for the planters to obtain labour and made Newfoundland a more attractive place for permanent settlement. The resident population of labourers put the planters in a relatively stronger position *vis à vis* the migratory fishers and *vis à vis* their servants. The increasing number of resident labourers also allowed the planters to extend their fishery beyond that of the migratory fishers and to expand their activities into the winter season. The most important of these activities was the winter and the spring seal fishery. This shift to residency was made easier because, in practice, the difference between the bye boat and resident fishers and between migratory and resident merchants had always been one of different economic strategies

within essentially capitalist relations of production and not an essential change in those relations. As such, the legal framework regulating the relations of production in the fishery continued to be derived from maritime custom and law, virtually unchanged from those which had prevailed in the previous century.

It has been the contention of a number of authorities (S. Antler 1975, followed by E. Antler 1981 and Sider 1986) there arose at this time a different set of relations of production, *household-based fishery*, which were not overtly capitalist in nature. The demographic characteristics which the *household-based fishery* would produce, a steady decrease in the numbers and percentages of servants and an increase in those of masters and mistresses, are not found. Those demographic changes found in the Conception Bay in this period, can be better explained as the normal response to periods of warfare rather than to any fundamental changes in the relations of production. The beginning of the period of marked growth in population and economic activity started later (1750 to 1755) around Conception Bay than other areas in Newfoundland, circa (1730). This dramatic upturn in the total resident population was not accompanied by an equally dramatic change in the makeup of the resident population, other than in an increase, both the relative and absolute, in the numbers of women (further indicating the permanent character of the *resident* population). From at least the 1760's fishers from Conception Bay began a migratory fishery on the Labrador, similar in pattern to that followed in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. The Labrador fishery was closely tied to the spring seal fishery, though it predated the latter by at least thirty years. Conception Bay

was the centre of the Labrador fishery from the inception of the fishery and remained so at least until the mid-point to the nineteenth century.

While a winter, shore seal fishery had existed since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century, the rapid growth in the seal industry (which was to continue to the middle of the nineteenth century) did not begin until the start of an offshore, spring seal fishery in the 1790s using small, open shallops and, a few years later, larger, decked schooners to exploit the large offshore seal herds. The offshore seal fishery was the starting point for the Conception Bay seal fishery. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Conception Bay came to dominate the island's seal fishery with that fishery serving as the chief industry of the major Conception Bay communities.

The relations of production which dominated the social formation of Brigus and the other major centres around Conception Bay during the nineteenth century were capitalist. The class structure of these communities was dominated by three major groups forming two classes; merchants and planters forming the two major types of capitalists and fishing servants forming a proletarian working class. These three groups dominated the relations of production in nineteenth century Conception Bay just as they had dominated the class structure of the resident fishery in the eighteenth century. The large merchant firms which existed around Conception Bay and in St. John's served as suppliers to the planters operating, primarily, in the seal and Labrador fisheries, though many were also involved directly in the productive process. The economic relations which existed between merchants and planters was formulated in the tradition

and law of *current supply*. Planters were, generally, small capitalists (though at times the near equals of the outport merchants both in terms of status and in terms of the scale of their operations) owning and controlling the means of production, buying the means of production and wage goods from other capitalists (i.e. merchants), and depending on hired labourers. The economic basis of the Conception Bay planters, who were among the most prosperous in Newfoundland, was the summer Labrador cod fishery and the spring seal fishery.

The fishing servants, both those working for fixed wages (i.e. *shipped men*) and those working for a share of the production of the fishing voyage (i.e. *sharemen*), quite clearly were members of a proletarian working class (rather than some form of independent producers) in that, as laborers, they were dependent on capital for the wages necessary to purchase their subsistence and they lacked any effective control of means of production. The existence or prevalence of wage contracts paid in a set wage or in shares did not indicate that the social or economic organization of the fishery was anything other than capitalist. Both payments in set wages and in shares were simply different forms of wages and were recognized as such by the courts.

This essentially capitalist fishery, the *planter fishery*, is generally considered to have been the dominant set of relations of production up through the first third of the nineteenth century. A number of authorities have argued, however, that the *planter fishery* disappeared from Newfoundland around the year 1840. It is the argument of this thesis that such was not the case and that the planters' fishery remained the dominant fishery, at least around Conception Bay,

throughout the period covered in this chapter.

Brigus was involved in the Labrador and spring seal fishery from those fisheries beginnings and those fisheries were the economic bases for the growth in Brigus in the nineteenth century. The social and economic character of Brigus was that of a relatively prosperous community, dominated by a class of independent planters and with considerable competition among merchants. These characteristics were shared with a number of other communities of similar size around Conception Bay. The period from about 1820 to about 1860 was the height of Brigus's prosperity with the community being probably the most important sealing port in Conception Bay if not in all of Newfoundland.

The period from 1880 to 1945 was marked by a decline in the population, economic activity, and prosperity of Brigus. The direct cause of this fall in population was the rapid collapse of the seal fishery in Brigus. The cause, in turn, of the decline of the Brigus seal fishery was the introduction of sealing steamers by the large St. John's merchant firms and the entry of those firms into direct production in the seal fishery. This culminated in a shift from Brigus of the seal fishery, the ancillary work that the seal fishery produced, and, ultimately, population to St. John's.

With the ending of the Brigus seal fishery, the community became increasingly dependent on the Labrador fishery alone. Despite the collapse of the seal fishery and the growing dependence on a single economic resource, the summer Labrador cod fishery, the planter fishery continued. In fact, the Labrador fishery from Conception Bay probably reached its peak, at least in terms of production,

in the late nineteenth century. However, the technological character of that fishery changed from one dominated by the floater fishery to one dominated by the stationer fishery. Besides the decline in the floater fishery itself, three factors probably accounted for the rise in the importance and relative numbers of stationers from Conception Bay; the introduction of the cod trap to the Labrador fishery in the 1870s, the introduction of motor boats in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the increasing tendency of merchants to ship dried cod directly from the coast of Labrador.

Despite these changes in the dominant technologies of the Labrador fishery, the class structure of Brigus and the relations of production which dominated its fishery showed no radical changes during this period. The planters' fishery in Brigus gradually declined along with the community. It was not replaced by some other set of relations of production within the fishery. The shift of the merchant activity from Brigus to St. John's, which had begun earlier in the century, continued in this period. The firms which remained in Brigus tended to be relatively small sideline operations of the larger planters. Despite changes and setbacks, the Brigus planters remained essentially capitalists. The planters continued to own, control, and have an effective monopoly over the means of production, and remained dependent on hired labour for their production.

In the Brigus Labrador fishery most work continued to be done by hired labour, whether the hire was for set wages or for a share of the catch, as it had been in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century. However, the decline of the seal fishery carried out from Brigus, the introduction of steamers into the

seal fishery and its shift to St. John's, and the general depression in the price of dried cod, brought significant changes in work conditions for the labouring classes of Brigus. Fishing servants, like the planters, were forced to depend to a greater extent solely on the returns of the summer Labrador cod fishery. Unlike the planters, however, there was little the fishing servants could do to increase those returns. In response the Brigus working class emigrated in search of employment, on both a temporary basis and permanent basis. The rapid drop in population began some time around the year 1880.

The character of the working relations existing between fishing servants and skippers (usually the planter) in the Brigus Labrador fishery were fundamentally different from those which have been presented for the family based or *traditional* Newfoundland fishery. While the latter has usually been presented as essentially non-authoritarian and egalitarian relations between skipper and crew, the general character of those relations in the Brigus Labrador fishery were, on the contrary, quite explicitly hierarchical and authoritarian: the character of the relation between the skipper-planter and his crew was explicitly that of employer and employee.

TABLES

Table 1.

Summer population of inhabitants, Conception Bay.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F
1675	36	311	22	†	63	432
1676	35	431	25	†	71	562
1677	43	393	24	2	88	550
1692	60	291	38	‡	86	475
1693	70	274	40	‡	143	527
1697	106	822	†	†	†	>1000
1698	82	415	61	0	123	681
1699	†	†	†	†	†	947
1700	†	†	†	†	†	1137
1701	142	†	†	†	†	†
1702	79	344	80	0	213	716
1703	162	‡	†	†	†	†
1706	38	250	41	0	122	451
1708	63	344	37	0	99	543
1709	50	236	52	0	114	452
1710	566	‡	89	‡	155	810
1715	99	636	96	0	217	1048
1720	49	309	36	34	157	585
1722	61	175	56	15	170	477
1723	175	547	135	36	403	1296
1724	35	150	35	100	140	460
1725	26	100	25	10	95	251
1726	103	550	93	1	240	987
1727	106	560	94	1	244	1005
1730	50	199	45	14	161	469
1731	50	165	42	22	158	437
1732	102	442	85	6	290	925
1733	42	320	30	6	40	438
1734	41	310	30	6	42	428
1735	116	407	102	9	515	1230
1736	57	470	44	7	165	743
1738	84	826	74	19	180	1183
1739	109	433	106	17	515	1180
1740	36	330	44	13	95	518
1741	41	275	37	22	196	571
1742	123	501	110	52	492	1278
1745	201	957	106	35	113	1412
1746	125	856	96	45	295	1417
1748	67	595	60	17	208	947
1749	70	437	63	12	242	842
1750	70	365	63	12	242	770
1751	70	437	63	12	242	842

1752	170	1310	139	23	480	2122
1753	243	1606	164	57	493	2563
1754	250	1600	160	56	490	2564
1755	266	1550	222	44	421	2503
1757	290	1491	220	113	1229	3343
1758	333	1600	236	117	1339	3625
1759	332	1585	250	146	1430	3743
1760	363	2115	256	206	35	2975
1762	320	864	297	350	1387	3218
1763	203	1243	160	149	1340	3095
1764	246	1584	175	149	1329	5101
1765	*	*	*	*	*	*
1766	*	*	*	*	*	*
1767	*	*	*	*	*	*
1768	*	*	*	*	*	*
1771	†	†	†	†	†	5327
1774	*	*	*	*	*	*
1775	*	*	*	*	*	*
1776	480	2350	430	357	2180	5877
1778	†	†	†	†	†	5768
1781	1100	†	528	†	1870	3498
1786	444	1458	267	328	1091	5518
1787	886	2128	479	329	2748	6570
1788	861	1994	485	300	2613	6253
1789	837	1280	480	356	2471	5424
1790	587	1113	348	426	2484	4958
1791	558	1187	346	390	2590	5071
1793	*	*	*	*	*	*
1794	†	†	†	†	†	6007
1795	†	†	†	†	†	6062
1796	†	†	†	†	†	5122
1798	†	†	†	†	†	4671
1801	*	*	*	*	*	*
1802	†	†	†	†	†	6838
1803	†	†	†	†	†	6966
1804	†	†	†	†	†	7520
1805	†	†	†	†	†	7813
1807	†	†	†	†	†	9598
1808	†	†	†	†	†	9800
1809	†	†	†	†	†	7996
1811	†	†	†	†	†	10570
1812	†	†	†	†	†	10287
1813	†	†	†	†	†	11098
1814	†	†	†	†	†	11235
1815	†	†	†	†	†	13445

1816	†	†	†	†	†	12863
1817	†	†	†	†	†	14166
1818	†	†	†	†	†	12476
1819	†	†	†	†	†	14126
1820	†	†	†	†	†	15580
1821	†	†	†	†	†	18377
1822	†	†	†	†	†	17778
1823	†	†	†	†	†	18060
1824	†	†	†	†	†	18207
1825	†	†	†	†	‡	18207
1826	†	†	†	†	†	18860

A, Masters. B, Men servants. C, Mistresses. D, Women servants. E, Children. F, Total. † Not given. ‡ Combined with column to the left. * Not listed separately from winter population. Note that previous to 1764 the Roman Catholic population does not seem to have been enumerated.

Table 2

Winter population of inhabitants, Conception Bay.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F
1675	†	†	†	†	†	†
1676	†	†	†	†	†	†
1677	†	†	†	†	†	†
1692	†	†	†	†	†	†
1693	†	†	†	†	†	†
1697	†	†	†	†	†	†
1698	†	†	†	†	†	331
1700	†	†	†	†	†	†
1701	†	†	†	†	†	†
1702	†	†	†	†	†	†
1703	†	†	†	†	†	†
1706	†	†	†	†	†	†
1708	†	†	†	†	†	†
1709	†	†	†	†	†	†
1710	†	†	†	†	†	†
1715	†	†	†	†	†	†
1720	†	†	†	†	†	500
1722	†	†	†	†	†	407
1723	172	427	135	36	306	1076
1724	35	150	35	0	140	360
1725	26	90	25	10	88	239
1726	100	440	93	1	243	877
1727	100	415	94	1	142	752
1729	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
1730	49	117	45	14	161	386
1731	49	190	42	22	157	460
1732	82	330	85	6	308	811
1733	42	320	30	6	40	438
1734	41	295	30	6	42	414
1735	116	497	102	9	515	1239
1736	39	235	43	7	165	489
1738	70	523	74	19	167	853
1739	109	307	106	15	492	1029
1740	36	210	44	13	67	370
1741	41	105	29	22	196	393
1742	118	478	110	52	492	1250
1745	113	887	106	35	117	1258
1746	124	680	99	45	242	1190
1748	67	400	40	16	179	702
1749	68	405	62	12	215	762
1750	68	405	62	12	215	762
1751	68	327	62	12	215	684

1752	154	560	139	15	420	1288
1753	220	1249	161	50	453	2133
1754	215	1160	160	50	440	2025
1755	259	750	222	53	489	1773
1757	268	1453	220	113	1229	3283
1758	301	1518	236	119	1339	3513
1759	311	1600	250	146	1430	3737
1760	280	550	256	181	35	1302
1762	410	2010	364	397	1500	4681
1763	179	1020	160	146	1019	2527
1764	246	1584	175	149	1329	3483
1765	267	1984	193	101	1339	3884
1766	230	1900	204	170	1579	4083
1767	242	1950	242	183	1649	4266
1768	365	1698	295	194	1737	4283
1774	420	2411	445	364	201	3841
1775	495	1700	420	330	2150	5095
1776	480	2350	430	357	2180	5877
1786	365	1010	253	286	2260	4174
1787	845	1848	466	357	2552	6068
1788	821	1495	462	276	2487	5541
1789	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
1790	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
1791	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
1793	636	1322	643	521	1215	4347
1794	602	1229	626	510	2939	5906
1795	493	1433	486	573	2968	5953
1796	440	1308	453	458	2280	4939
1798	910	1255	905	392	3021	6483
1801	1067	783	911	283	3331	6375
1802	1100	836	915	289	3319	6459
1803	996	1332	985	128	3127	6546
1804	1050	1640	1040	130	3267	7127
1805	1050	1640	1040	130	3267	7127
1807	1085	1649	1060	165	4010	7969
1808	1120	1740	1086	280	5000	9226
1809	1048	1352	789	237	4570	7996
1811	1140	1110	1810	469	5020	9549
1812	950	1880	950	557	4796	9133
1813	940	1920	1135	850	4670	9515
1814	900	2000	1150	900	4700	9650
1815	980	3630	1175	930	4920	11635
1816	1050	2700	1290	1000	5200	11240
1817	1500	3240	1200	1415	5480	12835
1818	1350	2700	1250	1190	4600	11090

1819	1600	3360	1280	1500	4650	12390
1820	1450	4200	1340	1450	4700	13140
1821	1500	5600	1340	2260	5000	15700
1822	1400	5550	1360	2000	5100	15410
1823	1410	5280	1370	2315	5700	16075
1824	1400	5220	1378	2340	5750	16088
1825	1420	5471	1390	2355	5990	16626
1826	1435	5328	1512	2520	5806	16601
1827	1469	5560	1510	3100	6845	19503*
1828	2733	2810	2659	582	9075	17859
1829	2733	1987	2659	582	10075	18859
1830	2733	1987	2659	582	9075	17859
1831	2733	1987	2659	582	9075	17859
1832	2733	1987	2659	582	9075	17859
1833	2733	1987	2659	582	9075	17859

A, Masters. B, Men servants. C, Mistresses. D, Women servants. E, Children. F, Total. † Not given. ‡ Combined with column to the left. Note that previous to 1764 the Roman Catholic population does not seem to have been enumerated.

Table 3

Boats gear etc, Conception Bay.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1675	†	†	†	†	†	69	†
1676	†	†	†	†	†	85	†
1677	†	†	†	†	†	90	†
1697	†	†	†	†	†	154	†
1698	†	†	†	†	†	110	†
1699	15	46	2	75	3	131	†
1700	30	8	†	124	14	197	†
1701	15	10	1	41	11	149	†
1702	1	9	†	3	3	132	†
1703	1	†	†	1	†	27	†
1706	7	†	†	14	†	50	†
1708	4	†	†	10	†	82	†
1709	6	†	†	16	†	61	†
1710	11	14	6	39	1	94	†
1715	9	1	0	58	1	164	†
1720	4	4	0	8	0	62	†
1722	11	6	0	6	0	73	†
1723	44	33	11	89	66	198	†
1724	9	5	0	3	0	78	†
1725	10	2	1	29	0	27	†
1726	20	5	0	32	1	110	†
1727	2	5	0	22	0	144	†
1730	16	8	2	19	3	49	†
1731	10	6	3	12	0	59	†
1732	17	18	5	28	0	93	†
1733	8	6	3	18	0	60	†
1734	9	6	3	4	0	50	†
1735	13	6	4	21	10	125	†
1736	17	5	1	40	18	48	†
1738	26	36	3	47	0	52	†
1739	15	7	5	29	10	130	†
1740	6	0	0	17	0	26	†
1741	6	3	0	29	0	50	†
1742	14	7	1	34	10	117	†
1745	4	10	5	17	0	142	†
1746	9	5	8	24	18	158	†
1748	15	16	9	30	98	80	†
1749	15	24	9	33	64	123	†
1750	13	21	9	32	64	123	†
1751	13	21	9	32	64	123	†
1752	29	14	5	74	64	204	†
1753	46	5	6	84	93	236	†

1754	31	5	8	60	80	228	†
1755	43	0	5	77	74	210	†
1757	6	3	4	10	30	270	†
1758	1	9	3	2	34	273	†
1759	13	5	2	16	59	274	†
1760	15	8	4	32	109	317	†
1762	0	3	2	0	30	209	†
1763	11	19	6	22	63	249	†
1764	17	9	5	25	74	264	†
1765	24	21	5	40	97	289	†
1766	28	27	9	56	120	304	†
1768	23	17	12	26	160	370	†
1774	17	32	16	36	140	572	†
1775	23	28	8	45	114	536	†
1786	20	33	0	24	62	363	†
1787	23	29	0	75	58	329	†
1788	26	17	0	44	27	309	†
1789	21	26	1	21	27	308	†
1790	7	37	5	11	25	325	†
1791	10	25	1	15	90	401	†
1793	4	11	2	12	14	375	†
1794	5	13	0	8	1	340	†
1795	1	11	1	1	0	330	†
1796	0	14	0	0	0	267	†
1797	2	15	1	2	0	262	†
1798	3	18	2	8	0	271	†
1801	2	12	5	1	0	325	†
1802	1	19	10	3	0	359	†
1803	7	14	9	12	0	624	†
1804	2	37	13	1	0	629	49
1805	0	41	14	0	0	629	75
1807	5	62	27	12	0	630	78
1808	1	62	3	0	0	640	56
1809	0	51	11	0	0	591	56
1811	0	42	7	0	0	680	70
1812	0	58	6	0	0	594	77
1813	0	64	4	0	0	570	83
1814	0	69	8	0	0	530	81
1815	0	76	13	0	0	550	70
1816	0	82	12	0	0	530	86
1817	0	43	35	0	0	500	85
1818	0	54	19	0	0	430	118
1819	0	55	22	0	0	410	162
1820	0	55	30	0	0	400	188
1821	0	61	18	0	0	400	188

1822	0	65	21	0	0	400	106
1823	0	50	17	0	0	400	167
1824	0	64	22	0	0	410	183
1825	0	41	36	0	0	420	135
1826	0	59	22	0	0	435	167
1827	0	91	14	0	0	520	192‡
1828	0	95	14	0	0	550	186‡
1829	0	63	17	0	0	480	184‡
1830	0	91	28	0	0	1090	159‡
1831	0	93	38	0	0	1090	361‡*
1832	0	97	36	0	0	1238	121‡
1833	0	97	32	0	0	1980	176

A, Fishing Ships. B, Sack Ships. C, Ships from America. D, Fishing Ships' Boats. E, Bye-boat Keepers' Boats. F, Inhabitants' Boats. G, Vessels going to the North or Labrador. † not given. ‡ includes coasters. * includes sealing vessels, therefore actual number of vessels approximately 180 as vessels counted twice.

Table 4

Ratio of summer population of inhabitants to winter popualtion of inhabitants, Conception Bay, 1698 to 1826.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F
1698	†	†	†	†	†	2.06
1720	†	†	†	†	†	1.17
1722	†	†	†	†	†	1.17
1723	1.02	1.28	1.00	1.00	1.32	1.20
1725	1.00	1.11	1.00	1.00	1.08	.95
1726	1.03	1.25	1.00	1.00	.99	1.13
1727	1.06	1.35	1.00	1.00	1.72	1.34
1730	1.02	1.70	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.22
1731	1.02	.87	1.00	1.00	1.01	.95
1732	1.24	1.34	1.00	1.00	.94	1.14
1733	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1734	1.00	1.05	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.04
1735	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1736	1.46	2.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.52
1738	1.20	1.58	1.00	1.00	1.08	1.39
1739	1.00	1.41	1.00	1.13	1.05	1.15
1740	1.00	1.57	1.00	1.00	1.42	1.40
1741	1.00	2.62	1.28	1.00	1.00	1.45
1742	1.04	1.05	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.02
1745	1.78	1.08	1.00	1.00	.97	1.12
1746	1.01	1.26	.97	1.00	1.22	1.19
1748	1.00	1.49	1.50	1.06	1.16	1.35
1749	1.02	1.02	1.08	1.00	1.13	1.10
1750	1.02	.90	1.08	1.00	1.13	1.01
1751	1.03	1.34	1.02	1.00	1.13	1.23
1752	1.10	2.34	1.00	1.53	1.14	1.65
1753	1:10	1.29	1.02	1.14	1.09	1.20
1754	1.16	1.38	1.00	1.12	1.11	1.27
1755	1.03	2.07	1.00	.83	.86	1.41
1757	1.08	1.03	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.02
1758	1.11	1.05	1.00	.98	1.00	1.03
1759	1.07	.99	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1760	1.30	3.85	1.00	1.14	1.00	2.28
1762	.78	.43	.82	.88	.92	.69
1763	1.13	1.22	1.00	1.00	1.32	1.22
1764	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1786	1.22	1.44	1.06	1.15	.48	1.32
1787	1.05	1.15	1.03	1.09	1.08	1.08
1788	1.05	1.33	1.05	1.09	1.05	1.13
1794	†	†	†	†	†	1.02
1795	†	†	†	†	†	1.02

1796	†	†	†	†	†	1.04
1798	†	†	†	†	†	.72
1802	†	†	†	†	†	1.06
1803	†	†	†	†	†	1.06
1804	†	†	†	†	†	1.06
1805	†	†	†	†	†	1.07
1807	†	†	†	†	†	1.20
1808	†	†	†	†	†	1.06
1809	†	†	†	†	†	1.00
1811	†	†	†	†	†	1.11
1812	†	†	†	†	†	1.13
1813	†	†	†	†	†	1.17
1814	†	†	†	†	†	1.16
1815	†	†	†	†	†	1.16
1816	†	†	†	†	†	1.14
1817	†	†	†	†	†	1.10
1818	†	†	†	†	†	1.12
1819	†	†	†	†	†	1.14
1820	†	†	†	†	†	1.19
1821	†	†	†	†	†	1.17
1822	†	†	†	†	†	1.15
1823	†	†	†	†	†	1.12
1824	†	†	†	†	†	1.14
1825	†	†	†	†	†	1.10
1826	†	†	†	†	†	1.14

A, Masters. B, Men servants. C, Mistresses. D, Women servants. E, Children. F, Total. † Not given. ‡ Combined with column to the left. * Only winter population listed. Note that previous to 1764 the Roman Catholic population does not seem to have been enumerated.

Table 5a

Ratio of male servants to planters, Conception Bay.

Year	Masters	Men Servants	Ratio of Servants to Masters
1698	82	415	5.06
1702	79	344	4.35
1706	38	250	6.58
1708	63	344	5.46
1709	50	236	4.72
1715	99	636	6.42
1720	49	309	6.31
1722	61	175	2.87
1723	175	547	3.13
1724	35	150	4.29
1725	26	100	3.85
1726	103	550	5.34
1727	106	560	5.28
1730	50	199	3.98
1731	50	165	3.30
1732	102	442	4.33
1733	42	320	7.62
1734	41	310	7.56
1735	116	497	4.28
1736	57	470	8.25
1738	84	826	9.83
1739	109	433	3.97
1740	36	330	9.17
1741	41	275	6.71
1742	123	501	4.07
1745	201	957	4.76
1746	125	856	6.85
1748	67	595	8.88
1749	70	437	6.24
1750	70	365	5.21
1751	70	437	6.24
1752	170	1310	7.71
1753	243	1606	6.61
1754	250	1600	6.40
1755	266	1550	5.83
1757	290	1491	5.14
1758	333	1600	4.80
1759	332	1585	4.77
1760	363	2115	5.83
1762	320	864	2.70
1763	203	1243	6.12

1764	246	1584	6.44
1765	267	1984	7.43
1766	230	1900	8.26
1767	242	1950	8.06
1768	365	1608	4.65
1774	420	2411	5.74
1775	495	1700	3.43
1786	444	1458	3.28
1787	886	2128	2.40
1788	861	1994	2.32
1789	837	1280	1.53
1790	587	1113	1.00
1791	558	1187	2.12
1793	636	1322	2.08
1794	602	1330	2.21
1795	493	1542	3.13
1796	440	1491	3.39
1802	1100	1215	1.10
1803	996	1752	1.76
1804	1050	2033	1.94
1805	1050	2126	2.02
1807	1085	3278	3.02
1808	1120	2334	2.07
1809	1048	1352	1.29
1811	1140	2131	1.87
1812	950	3084	3.19
1813	940	3503	3.73
1814	900	3585	3.98
1815	980	5440	5.55
1816	1050	4323	4.12
1817	1500	4571	3.05
1818	1350	4086	3.03
1819	1600	5096	3.19
1820	1450	6640	4.58
1821	1500	8277	5.52
1822	1400	7918	5.66
1823	1410	7265	5.15
1824	1400	7429	5.31
1825	1420	7142	5.03
1826	1435	7587	5.29

'All figures are for summer population except for 1774 and 1775, those figures for the years following 1793 are estimated by adding the number of winter male servants to estimated numbers of migratory male servants (winter male servants+migratory male servants) as estimated in Table 5b.

Table 5b

Estimate of numbers of migratory servants, 1794-1826.

Year		Year		Year	
1794	101	1795	109	1796	183
1798	na	1802	379	1803	420
1804	393	1805	486	1807	1629
1808	574	1809	0	1811	1021
1812	1154	1813	1583	1814	1585
1815	1810	1816	1623	1817	1331
1818	1386	1819	1736	1820	2440
1821	2677	1822	2368	1823	1985
1824	2209	1825	1671	1826	2259

These numbers are actually the difference between the total summer and winter population of inhabitants, the assumption, which is supported by the censi from the eighteenth century (see Table 4), that the migratory population is composed overwhelmingly of servants (especially male servants). The average ratios of the summer population to the winter population of men servants for Conception Bay for the years 1750-1788, was 1.22, whereas the same averages for masters, mistresses, women servants, and children were 1.08, 1.02, 1.06, and 1.01, respectively. Note that from 1794 on among those migratory servants there probably were persons coming from other areas of Newfoundland. The figure for 1798 is not used as there is a sharp drop in overall population listed and, therefore the number of migratory servants can not be estimated.

Table 6.

Masters and the rest of the population and ratio, Conception Bay.

Year	Masters	Rest of the population.	Ratio of the rest the population to masters.
1675	36	394	11.00
1676	35	527	15.06
1677	43	507	11.79
1692	60	415	6.92
1693	70	457	6.53
1698	82	599	7.30
1702	79	637	8.06
1706	38	413	10.87
1708	63	480	7.62
1709	50	402	8.04
1715	99	949	9.59
1720	49	536	10.94
1722	61	416	6.82
1723	175	1121	6.41
1724	35	425	12.14
1725	26	225	8.65
1726	103	884	8.58
1727	106	899	8.48
1730	50	419	8.38
1731	50	387	7.74
1732	102	823	8.07
1733	42	396	9.43
1734	41	387	9.44
1735	116	1123	9.68
1736	57	686	12.04
1738	84	1099	13.08
1739	109	1071	9.83
1740	36	482	13.39
1741	41	530	12.93
1742	123	1155	9.39
1745	201	1211	6.02
1746	125	1292	10.34
1748	67	880	13.13
1749	70	772	11.03
1750	70	700	10.00
1751	70	772	11.03
1752	170	1952	11.48
1753	243	2320	9.55
1754	250	2314	9.26
1755	266	2237	8.41

1757	290	3053	10.53
1758	333	3292	9.89
1759	332	3411	10.27
1760	363	2612	7.20
1762	320	2898	9.06
1763	203	2892	14.25
1764	246	4855	19.74
1765	267	3617	13.55
1766	230	3853	16.75
1767	242	4024	16.63
1768	365	3918	10.73
1774	420	3421	8.15
1775	495	4600	9.29
1786	444	5074	11.43
1787	886	5684	6.42
1788	861	5392	6.26
1789	837	4587	5.48
1790	587	4371	7.45
1791	558	4513	8.09
1793	636	3711	5.83
1794	602	5304	8.81
1795	493	5460	11.08
1796	440	4499	10.23
1798	910	5573	6.12
1801	1067	5308	4.97
1802	1100	5359	4.87
1803	996	5550	5.57
1804	1050	6077	5.79
1805	1050	6077	5.79
1807	1085	6884	6.34
1808	1120	8106	7.24
1809	1048	6948	6.63
1811	1140	8409	7.38
1812	950	8183	8.61
1813	940	8575	9.12
1814	900	8750	9.72
1815	980	10655	10.87
1816	1050	10190	9.70
1817	1500	11335	7.56
1818	1350	9740	7.21
1819	1600	10790	6.74
1820	1450	11690	8.06
1821	1500	14200	9.47
1822	1400	14010	10.01
1823	1410	14665	10.40

1824	1400	14688	10.49
1825	1420	15206	10.71
1826	1435	15166	10.57
1827	1469	18034	12.28
1828	2733	15126	5.53
1829	2733	16126	5.90
1830	2733	15126	5.53

All figures are for summer population except for 1774 and 1775, and from 1793 forward.

Table

Ratio of boats of planters to masters, Conception Bay.

Year	Boats of planters	Masters	Ratio of Boats to Masters
1698	110	82	1.34
1702	132	79	1.67
1706	50	38	1.32
1708	82	63	1.30
1709	61	50	1.22
1715	164	99	1.66
1720	62	49	1.27
1722	73	61	1.20
1723	108	175	.62
1724	78	35	2.23
1725	27	26	1.04
1726	110	103	1.07
1727	144	106	1.36
1730	49	50	.98
1731	59	50	1.18
1732	93	102	.91
1733	60	42	1.43
1734	50	41	1.22
1735	125	116	1.08
1736	48	57	.84
1738	52	84	.62
1739	130	109	1.19
1740	26	36	.72
1741	50	41	1.22
1742	117	123	.95
1745	142	201	.71
1746	158	125	1.26
1748	80	67	1.19
1749	123	70	1.76
1750	123	70	1.76
1751	123	70	1.76
1752	204	170	1.20
1753	236	243	.97
1754	228	250	.91
1755	210	266	.79
1757	270	290	.93
1758	273	333	.82
1759	274	332	.83
1760	317	363	.87

1762	209	320	.65
1763	249	203	1.23
1764	264	246	1.07
1765	289	267	1.08
1766	304	230	1.32
1768	370	365	1.01
1774	572	420	1.36
1775	536	405	1.08
1786	363	444	.82
1787	329	886	.37
1788	309	861	.36
1789	308	837	.38
1790	325	587	.55
1791	401	558	.72
1793	375	636	.59
1794	340	602	.56
1795	330	493	.67
1796	267	440	.61
1798	271	910	.30
1801	325	1067	.30
1802	359	1100	.33
1803	624	996	.63
1804	629	1050	.60
1805	629	1050	.60
1807	630	1085	.58
1808	640	1120	.57
1809	591	1048	.56
1811	680	1140	.60
1812	594	950	.63
1813	570	940	.61
1814	530	900	.59
1815	550	980	.56
1816	530	1050	.50
1817	500	1500	.33
1818	430	1350	.32
1819	410	1600	.26
1820	400	1450	.28
1821	400	1500	.27
1822	400	1400	.29
1823	400	1410	.28
1824	410	1400	.29
1825	420	1420	.30
1826	435	1435	.30

1827	520	1469	.35
1828	550	2733	.20
1829	480	2733	.18
1830	1090	2733	.40

All figures are for summer population except for 1774 and 1775, and from 1793 forward.

Table 8

Population groups by percentage, Conception Bay.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F
1675†	8	71	5	0	14	100
1676†	6	76	4	0	12	100
1677†	8	71	4	0	16	99
1698†	12	61	9	0	18	100
1702†	11	48	11	0	30	100
1706†	8	55	9	0	27	99
1708†	12	63	7	0	18	100
1709†	11	52	12	0	25	100
1715†	9	61	9	0	21	100
1720†	8	53	6	6	27	100
1722†	13	37	12	3	36	101
1723	16	40	13	3	28	100
1724	10	42	10	0	39	101
1725	11	38	10	4	37	100
1726	11	50	11	0	28	100
1727	13	55	13	0	19	100
1730	13	30	12	4	42	101
1731	11	41	9	5	34	100
1732	10	41	10	1	38	100
1733	10	73	7	1	9	100
1734	10	71	7	1	10	99
1735†	9	40	8	1	42	100
1736	8	48	9	1	34	100
1738	8	61	9	2	20	100
1739	11	30	10	1	48	100
1740	10	57	12	4	18	101
1741	10	27	7	6	50	100
1742	9	38	9	4	39	99
1745	9	71	8	3	9	100
1746	10	57	8	4	20	99
1748	10	57	6	2	25	100
1749	9	53	8	2	28	100
1750	9	53	8	2	28	100
1751	10	48	9	2	31	100
1752	12	43	11	1	33	100
1753	10	59	8	2	21	100
1754	11	57	8	2	22	100
1755	15	42	13	3	28	101
1757	8	44	7	3	37	99
1758	9	43	7	3	38	100
1759	8	43	7	4	38	100
1760	22	42	20	14	3	101

1762	9	43	8	8	32	100
1763	7	40	6	6	40	99
1764	7	45	5	4	38	99
1765	7	51	5	3	34	100
1766	6	47	5	4	39	101
1767	6	46	6	4	39	101
1768	9	40	7	5	40	101
1774	11	63	12	9	5	100
1775	10	33	8	6	42	99
1776	8	41	7	6	38	100
1786	9	24	6	7	54	100
1787	14	30	8	6	42	100
1788	15	27	8	5	45	100
1789	15	24	9	7	46	101
1790	12	22	7	9	50	100
1791	11	23	7	8	51	100
1793	15	30	15	12	28	100
1794	10	21	11	9	50	101
1795	8	24	8	10	50	100
1796	9	26	9	9	46	99
1798	14	19	14	6	47	100
1801	17	12	14	4	52	99
1802	17	13	14	4	51	99
1803	15	20	15	2	48	100
1804	15	23	15	2	46	101
1805	15	23	15	2	46	101
1807	14	21	13	2	50	100
1808	12	19	12	3	54	100
1809	13	17	10	3	57	100
1811	12	12	19	5	53	101
1812	10	21	10	6	53	100
1813	10	20	12	9	49	100
1814	9	21	12	9	49	100
1815	8	31	10	8	42	99
1816	9	24	11	9	46	99
1817	12	25	9	11	43	100
1818	12	24	11	11	41	99
1819	13	27	10	12	38	100
1820	11	32	10	11	36	100
1821	10	36	9	14	32	101
1822	9	36	9	13	33	100
1823	9	33	9	14	35	100
1824	9	32	9	15	36	101
1825	9	33	8	14	36	100
1826	9	32	9	15	35	100

1827	8	30	8	17	37	100
1828	15	16	15	3	51	100
1829	15	11	15	3	56	100
1830	16	12	16	3	53	100

A, Masters. B, Men servants. C, Mistresses. D, Women servants. E, Children. F, Total. All figures are for the winter population of inhabitants except for those years, followed by a †, for which only the summer population is available.

Table 9

Working age population groups by percentage, Conception Bay.

Year	A	B	C	D	E
1675†	10	85	6	0	101
1676†	7	88	5	0	100
1677†	10	86	5	0	101
1698†	15	74	11	0	100
1702†	16	68	16	0	100
1706†	12	76	12	0	100
1708†	14	77	8	0	99
1709†	15	70	15	0	100
1715†	12	77	12	0	101
1720†	11	72	8	8	99
1722†	20	57	18	5	100
1723	22	55	18	5	100
1724	16	68	16	0	100
1725	17	60	17	0	94
1726	16	69	15	0	100
1727	16	68	15	0	99
1730	22	52	20	6	100
1731	16	63	14	7	100
1732	16	66	17	1	100
1733	11	80	8	2	101
1734	11	79	8	2	100
1735†	16	69	14	1	100
1736	12	73	13	2	100
1738	10	76	11	3	100
1739	20	57	20	3	100
1740	12	69	15	4	100
1741	21	53	15	11	100
1742	16	63	15	7	101
1745	10	78	9	3	100
1746	13	72	10	5	100
1748	13	76	8	3	100
1749	12	74	11	2	99
1750	12	74	11	2	99
1751	14	70	13	3	100
1752	18	65	16	2	101
1753	13	74	10	3	100
1754	14	73	10	3	100
1755	20	58	17	4	99
1757	13	71	11	6	101
1758	14	70	11	5	100
1759	13	69	11	6	99

1760	22	43	20	14	00
1762	13	63	11	12	00
1763	12	68	11	10	101
1764	11	74	8	7	100
1765	10	78	8	4	100
1766	9	76	8	7	100
1767	9	75	9	7	100
1768	14	67	12	8	101
1774	12	66	12	10	100
1775	17	58	14	11	100
1776	13	65	12	10	100
1786	19	53	13	15	100
1787	24	53	13	10	100
1788	27	49	15	9	100
1789†	28	43	16	12	99
1790†	24	45	14	17	100
1791†	22	48	14	16	100
1793	20	42	21	17	100
1794	20	41	21	17	99
1795	17	48	16	19	100
1796	17	49	17	17	100
1798	26	36	26	11	99
1801	35	26	30	9	100
1802	35	27	29	9	100
1803	29	39	28	4	100
1804	27	42	27	3	99
1805	27	42	27	3	99
1807	27	42	27	4	100
1808	27	41	26	7	101
1800	31	39	23	7	100
1811	25	25	40	10	100
1812	22	43	22	13	100
1813	19	40	23	18	100
1814	18	40	23	18	99
1815	15	54	17	14	100
1816	17	45	21	17	100
1817	20	44	16	19	99
1818	21	42	19	18	100
1819	21	43	17	19	100
1820	17	50	16	17	100
1821	14	52	13	21	100
1822	14	54	13	19	100
1823	14	51	13	22	100
1824	14	50	13	23	100
1825	13	51	13	22	99

1826	13	49	14	23	99
1827	13	48	13	27	101
1828	31	32	30	7	100
1829	34	25	33	7	99

A, Masters. B, Men servants. C, Mistresses. D, Women servants. E, Total. All figures are for the winter population of inhabitants except for those years, followed by a †, for which only the summer population is available.

Table 10

Masters, Mistresses, Children, and ratios, Conception Bay.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F
1698†	82	61	123	.74	1.50	2.24
1702†	79	80	213	1.01	2.70	3.71
1706†	38	41	122	1.08	3.21	4.29
1708†	63	37	99	.59	1.57	2.16
1709†	50	52	114	1.04	2.28	3.32
1715†	99	96	217	.97	2.19	3.16
1720†	49	36	157	.73	3.20	3.94
1722†	61	56	170	.92	2.79	3.70
1723	172	135	306	.78	1.78	2.56
1724	35	35	140	1.00	4.00	5.00
1725	26	25	88	.96	3.38	4.35
1726	100	93	243	.93	2.43	3.36
1727	100	94	142	.94	1.42	2.36
1730	49	45	161	.92	3.29	4.20
1731	49	42	157	.86	3.20	4.06
1732	82	85	308	1.04	3.76	4.79
1733	42	30	40	.71	.95	1.67
1734	41	30	42	.73	1.02	1.76
1735	116	102	515	.88	4.44	5.32
1736	39	43	165	1.10	4.23	5.33
1738	70	74	167	1.06	2.39	3.44
1739	109	106	492	.97	4.51	5.49
1740	36	44	67	1.22	1.86	3.08
1741	41	29	196	.71	4.78	5.49
1742	118	110	492	.93	4.17	5.10
1745	113	106	117	.94	1.04	1.97
1746	124	99	242	.80	1.95	2.75
1748	67	40	179	.60	2.67	3.27
1749	68	62	215	.91	3.16	4.07
1750	68	62	215	.91	3.16	4.07
1751	68	62	215	.91	3.16	4.07
1752	154	139	420	.90	2.73	3.63
1753	220	161	453	.73	2.06	2.79
1754	215	160	440	.74	2.05	2.79
1755	259	222	489	.86	1.89	2.75
1757	268	220	1229	.82	4.59	5.41
1758	301	236	1339	.78	4.45	5.23
1759	311	250	1430	.80	4.60	5.40
1760	280	256	35	.91	.12	1.04
1762	410	364	1500	.89	3.66	4.55
1763	179	160	1019	.89	5.69	6.59

1764	246	175	1329	.71	5.40	6.11
1765	267	193	1339	.72	5.01	5.74
1766	230	204	1579	.89	6.87	7.75
1767	242	242	1649	1.00	6.81	7.81
1768	365	295	1737	.81	4.76	5.57
1774	420	445	201	1.06	.48	1.54
1775	495	420	2150	.85	4.34	5.19
1776	480	430	2180	.90	4.54	5.44
1786	365	253	2260	.69	6.19	6.88
1787	845	466	2552	.55	3.02	3.57
1788	821	462	2487	.56	3.03	3.59
1789†	837	480	2471	.57	2.95	3.53
1790†	587	348	2484	.59	4.23	4.82
1791†	558	346	2590	.62	4.64	5.26
1793	636	643	1215	1.01	1.91	2.92
1794	602	626	2939	1.04	4.88	5.92
1795	493	486	2968	.99	6.02	7.01
1796	440	453	2280	1.03	5.18	6.21
1798	910	905	3021	.99	3.32	4.31
1801	1067	911	3331	.85	3.12	3.98
1802	1100	915	3319	.83	3.02	3.85
1803	996	965	3127	.97	3.14	4.11
1804	1050	1040	3267	.99	3.11	4.10
1805	1050	1040	3267	.99	3.11	4.10
1807	1085	1060	4010	.98	3.70	4.67
1808	1120	1086	5000	.97	4.46	5.43
1809	1048	789	4570	.75	4.36	5.11
1811	1140	1810	5020	1.59	4.40	5.99
1812	950	950	4796	1.00	5.05	6.05
1813	940	1135	4670	1.21	4.97	6.18
1814	900	1150	4700	1.28	5.22	6.50
1815	980	1175	4920	1.20	5.02	6.22
1816	1050	1290	5200	1.23	4.95	6.18
1817	1500	1200	5480	.80	3.65	4.45
1818	1350	1250	4600	.93	3.41	4.33
1810	1600	1280	4650	.80	2.91	3.71
1820	1450	1340	4700	.92	3.24	4.17
1821	1500	1340	5000	.89	3.33	4.23
1822	1400	1360	5100	.97	3.64	4.61
1823	1410	1370	5700	.97	4.04	5.01
1824	1400	1378	5750	.98	4.11	5.09
1825	1420	1390	5990	.98	4.22	5.20
1826	1435	1512	5806	1.05	4.05	5.10

1827	1469	1510	6845	1.03	4.66	5.69
1828	2733	2659	9075	.97	3.32	4.29
1829	2733	2659	10075	.97	3.69	4.66
1830	2733	2659	9075	.97	3.32	4.29

A, Masters. B, Mistresses. C, Children. D, Ratio mistresses to masters. E, Ratio children to masters. F, Ratio of mistresses and children to masters. All figures are for population of winter inhabitants except for those, marked with a †, for which only the summer figures are available.

Table 11

The Seal fishery in Conception Bay, 1722 to 1833.

Value of seals in pounds stirling.

Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#
1722	60	1739	800	1762	900	1790	320
1723	349	1740	320	1763	150	1791	620
1724	120	1741	2,200	1764	150	1793	560
1725	40	1742	144	1765	200	1794	290
1726	955	1745	150	1766	800	1795	550
1727	20	1746	380	1767	200	1796	2,600
1730	140	1748	50	1774	120	1797	5,600
1731	375	1753	36	1775	80	1798	4,200
1732	150	1757	150	1786	320	1801	3,400
1735	165	1758	170	1787	250	1802	4,280
1736	579	1759	310	1788	250		
1738	19	1760	390	1789	150		

Year	Number of seals taken	Tons of oil made	Year	Number of seals taken	Tons of oil made
1800	17,638	†	1818	115,228	1,273
1806	30,485	†	1819	179,050	2,023
1807	58,886	†	1820	152,502	1,688
1808	76,983	1,011	1821	201,392	2,180
1809	44,486	625	1824	70,931	839
1810	57,332	570	1826	180,759	2,410
1811	67,991	670	1827	219,778	2,747
1813	76,986	855	1828	117,409	1,467
1814	72,111	†	1829	†	†
1815	61,106	†	1830	286,459	†
1816	103,359	1,134	1831	342,874	4,273
1817	32,939	†	1832	233,845	2,923

	Harbour Grace & Carbonear		Port-de-Grave etc.	
Year	Number of seals taken	Tons of oil made	Number of seals taken	Tons of oil made
1833	196,000	3,761	100,302	590‡

† not given. ‡ "The greater part of these seals sent to St. John's & there manufactured."

Table 12

Sealing vessels and crews, Saint John's and Newfoundland total.

	Saint John's			Newfoundland total.		
Year	Number	Tonnage	Number of men	Number‡	Tonnage	Number of men
1808	22	1,186	299	131	5,764	1,570
1809	37	1,778	484	135	6,427	1,785
1810	37	1,694	486	110	3,357	1,568
1811	48	2,309	694	165	7,962	2,337
1813	†	†	†	80	4,053	1,245
1814	†	†	†	84	4,579	1,344
1815	†	†	†	73	4,550	1,203
1816	†	†	†	108	5,883	1,760
1818	†	†	†	100	5,928	1,676
1819	32	1,710	545	182	3,802	†
1820	40	1,951	666	227	13,623	4,018
1821	39	1,998	651	207	11,448	3,304
1824	54	2,874	996	236	13,425	3,944
1826	70	†	1,322	†	†	2,387
1827	100	5,838	1,903	290	17,445	5,418
1828	95	6,032	1,950	296	18,612	5,759
1829	88	5,465	1,664	278	17,659	5,284
1830	97	6,511	2,082	293	23,208	5,735
1831	118	†	2,575	349	†	8,415
1832	154	8,400	3,314	420	27,241	9,024
1833	110	9,008	2,536	359	27,996	7,983

† Not given. ‡ Includes shallops, all of which are from Conception Bay.

Table 13

Sealing and Labrador vessels and crews, Conception Bay and Brigus, 1804 to 1945.

	Conception Bay						Vessels going to the North or Labrador.
	Number of:		Tonnage of:		Number of men:		
Year	A	B	A	B	A	B	
1804	a	a	a	a	a	a	49
1805	a	a	a	a	a	a	75
1806	48	18	a	a	a	a	c
1807	77	8	a	a	a	a	78
1808	67	12	3,311	307	879	128	56
1809	59	7	2,926	230	826	80	56
1810	62		3,084		908		c
1811	81		3,885		1,175		70
1812	a		a		a		77
1813	69		3,524		1,099		83
1814	74		4,009		1,207		81
1815	68		4,091		1,127		70
1816	93		5,064		1,558		86
1817	a		a		a		85
1818	100		5,763		1,534		118
1819	140		a		a		162
1820	170		10,688		3,082		188
1821	152		8,773		2,382		188
1822	a		a		a		106
1823	a		a		a		167
1824	168		9,670		2,708		183
1825	a		a		a		135
1826	a		a		2,970		167
1827	174		10,565		3,226		192b
1828	177		11,123		3,383		186b
1829	176		11,326		3,362		184b
1830	172		15,232		3,287		159b
1831	205		a		4,350		159b
1832	221		16,246		4,766		121b

Year	Harbour Grace & Carbonear A	Tonage	Number of men	Port-de-Grave district. A	Tonage	Number of men	Vessels going to the North or the Labrador, Conception Bay, total -
1833	123	10,155	2,993	72	5,734	1;533	176

Brigus

Year	A	Number of men	Vessels going to Labrador.	Tonnage
1844d	39	a	c	3510
1847e	66	a	a	a
1848f	66	2111	c	5010
1848g	30	1,080	a	a
1856d	38	1435	c	3813
1868d	27	1454	a	3405
1869h	22	1222	a	2851
1870h	23	1306	a	2833
1871h	25	1254	a	3122
1872h	15	822	a	1603
1873h	21	1066	a	2321
1873d	39	1179	a	3137
1875h	16	774	a	1678
1876	10	493	a	1103
1877	7	333	a	687
1879	3	170	a	315
1880	6	317	a	639
1881	3	165	a	321
1882	1	65	a	146
1883	2	93	a	178
1883d	0	0	a	0
1884	1	65	36d	2228d
1890d	0	0	19i	1274
1900d	0	0	23	1246
1910d	0	0	4	293
1917j	0	0	20	1517

1920d	0	0	7	580
1923j	0	0	16	832
1934d	0	0	0	a
1944d	0	0	1	a

A, Schooners. B, Shallops. a, Not given. b, Includes coasters. c, Not given but probably about equel to the numbers of sealing vessels. d, Census, vessels owned in Brigus engaged in the fishery. e, Chafe 1924:40. f, Ryan 1971:148, vessels owned in Brigus. g, Chafe 1924:40, vessels "outfitted from Brigus". h, Includes two steams ships. i, Includes two bank fishing vessels. j, Vessels cleared from Brigus for Labrador therefore includes vessels from other communities and vessels opperating entirely as coasters. Other figures from newspapers of the time and from Lundrigan (1973). Note that figures from the newspapers of the time and from Lundrigan (1973) are fairly rough indicators as what is sometime being listed is the ports from which the vessels cleared from and sometimes the port to which they belong.

Table 14
History of family names, Brigus.

Pre-1760

145: Roberts 1745.
146: Norman 1745.
133: Percey for 120 years (from 1770) 1770.
127: Sparks before c. 1760.
141: Rabbits for 55 years (from 1805) 1768.
148: Sprackling for 68 years (from 1784) 1772.

1760 to 1780

120: Conway Heighington from about 1763 (gone by 1784).
142: Willm. Lane before 1768 (gone after that date).
: Walter Phealan 1768.
131: Willm. Newman 1769 (gone after that date).
136: F. La Dros before 1769 (gone after that date).
136: Jn. Bartlett 1769.
131: Willm. Antle Jun.'s Father before 1770.
153: Chas. Will before 1770 (gone after that date).
153: Azariah Mundon 1770
124: John Clark and Isaac Clark 1770.
152: John Plowman 1770.
: Wm. Walsh 1772 (only reference to in 147:/Ann Roberts 1772).
151: Robt. Knight's Mother before 1772.
149: Wm. Keating 1772.
130: John Noel 1778.

1780 to 1796

119: James Walker 1784.
120: Widow King and Sons 1784.
121: John Woolcock 1784.
149: Wm. Keating 1784.
125: Charles Merser 1785 but after 1770.
126: James Goushou 1785.
: John Morgan's (from in law) 1785.

1797 onwards

144: Thos. Quinlan 1797.
123: James Hays 1798.
: Geo. and James Kemp & Co 1800.
122: Thomas Rose 1802.
: Thomas Gill owned 1803 not in 1780.
: Joseph Richardson 1803.

Note that none of these family names appear in the 1708 census (C.O. 194.4:253-60 1708).

Table 15

Population and population increase, Brigus and Port-de-Grave.

Year	Probable† population Brigus	Increase percapita per annum	Population Port-de-Grave	Increase percapita perannum
1807	500-600‡			
1835	1200	=4	4387	
1844	1450	2.3	5722	3.38
1856	1612	1.1	6489	1.12
1868	1876	1.36	7513	1.32
1873	1975	1.06	7919	1.08
1883	2150	.89	8698	.98
1890	1541	-4.04	7986	-1.17
1900	1162	-2.46	7445	- .68
1910	1035	-1.09	6986	- .62
1920	936	- .96	6545	- .63
1934	886	- .38	5699	- .92
1944	888	.02	5136	- .90

† The figures here are parially estimated because the boundaries of the communities were not set at this date and hence in some censi neighboring communities are lumped together with the population of Brigus and in others they are not.. ‡ Estimated from Figure 3.12.

Table 16

The fisheries at Brigus, 1836 to 1945.

Numbers of men listed as "Catching and Curing Fish" and women listed as "Curing Fish."

Year	Brigus Males		Females	Ratio	Newfoundland Ratio
1844	207†				
1856		487			
1868		510			
1873		528			
1883		670			
1890	235	(299)	64	3.67	2.04
1900	201	(242)	31	6.48	1.94
1910	145	(166)	21	6.90	1.89
1920	120	(171)	51	2.35	1.63
1934	94		‡		
1944	38		‡		

† Females seemingly not enumerated by profession. ‡ Females no longer listed as working in the fisheries.

Numbers of cod traps and numbers per capita, Brigus and Newfoundland.

Year	Number of cod traps Brigus	Newfoundland	Ratio of those "Catching and Curing Fish" to cod traps Brigus	Newfoundland
1883	119	4403	5.63	13.55
1900	107	2541	2.79	21.06
1000	142	4056	1.70	15.10
1910	82	6337	2.02	10.26
1920	69	7344	2.48	8.73

Ratio of those "Catching and Curing Fish" to population 15-70.

Year	Males	Females	Total	Year	Males	Females	Total
1844	.41	†	‡	1856			.51
1868			.51	1873			.44
1883			.47	1890	.52	.11	.20
1900	.58	.08	.32	1910	.46	.06	.26
1920	.43	.18	.30	1934	.33	*	.18
1944	.07	*	.04				

† Females seemingly not enumerated by profession. ‡ Not directly estimatable but probably about .5. * Females no longer listed as working in the fisheries.

Ratio of those "Catching and Curing Fish" to total of those listed by profession.

Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total
1844	.88	1856	.87	1868	.99	1873	.89
1883	.82	1890	.64	1900	.36	1910	.28
1920	.38	1934	.46	1944	.19		

Table 17

Population 15 to 70 years of age, males and females.

	Brigus				Port-de-Grave except Brigus			
	Number		Change per capita per annum		Number		Change per capita per annum	
Year	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1836	455	319			954	838		
1845	506	421	.93	2.66	1284	1012	2.88	1.73
1857	498	463	.00	.83	1401	1253	.76	1.98
1869	523	582	.42	2.14	1663	1524	1.56	1.80
1874	566	626	1.64	1.51	1771	1654	1.30	1.71
1884	684	735	2.08	1.74	1839	1777	.38	.74
1891	452	590	-4.85	-2.82	1957	1734	.92	- .35
1901	346	404	-2.35	-3.15	2048	1840	.47	.61
1911	316	331	- .87	-1.81	1907	1775	- .69	.35
1921	282	284	-1.08	-1.42	1745	1604	- .85	- .96
1935	266	283	- .57	- .04	1649	1463	- .55	- .88

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