

Outport Economics: Culture and Agriculture in Later Seventeenth-Century Newfoundland

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The planters hogs and cattle ... sometimes breake out to [the fishers'] stages and spoile some of their fish, but this is not great prejudice to them, in that the custom of the country obligeth the proprietors of the cattle to returne to them soe many fish as they have spoyled.

— Captain William Poole to the Committee for Trade and Plantations,
10 September 1677¹

THE ROYAL NAVY COMMODORES who visited the English Shore toward the end of the seventeenth century saw much of planter life. Sir William Poole was particularly inquisitive about the planter economy and was curious, as well, about the interrelationship between migratory fishing crews, whose interests were concentrated on one industry, and the planters, who had developed a range of interests that reached beyond the fishery to other concerns, for example cattle and hogs. The assumption that there was little economic life outside the fishery is a tempting simplification, particularly for analysis of staple production, but it is not necessarily an accurate assessment of the economic realities of later-seventeenth-century Newfoundland.² Nor were the landward activities of the planters significant only for their own households or only in economic terms. As Captain Poole observed, not only the economy but also the social practice of those who over-wintered on the English Shore were, inevitably, conditioned by the migratory fishery. This paper reconsiders the seventeenth-century fishery as a vernacular industry and as an economic context in which a distinctive Newfoundland culture first developed.

THE CASE OF THE FURRIERS' BOATS

A pair of civil and criminal suits, arising from an English expedition into Placentia Bay in the fall of 1679, illustrates the entanglement of the fishery with every aspect of life in Newfoundland and makes an apt introduction to the complex theme of the cultural significance of outpost economics. In mid-September 1679, John Wallis, a fishing servant of Fermeuse, traveled northwards along the English Shore to John Roulston's plantation at Toad's Cove. There he met four old friends, and they talked "about going to the westward ... a furring ... as most years tis usuall for some of the English to goe that way in the winter and have made good voyages of itt and turn to good profit". Roulston provisioned Wallis and his mates on credit and agreed to equip a sixth man, his own servant Samuel Wood, with provisions and ammunition for the expedition, "upon hopes of a good voyage" and a share of any proceeds. The men then traveled south to Caplin Bay and obtained "an old French shalloway" from Christopher Pollard, the planter there. (A shalloway was a decked sailing vessel a bit larger than an open fishing shallop.) Later, they claimed to have rented the shalloway for £5; at any rate, they agreed that if they lost Pollard's boat they would pay him £15 or find a replacement. Subsequent events suggest that this last option, a search for a new boat in French territory, was the actual intent of the agreement.³

The case sheds light on several aspects of the Newfoundland planter economy. Successful planters, like John Roulston and Christopher Pollard, did more than fish. On the other hand, fishing clearly structured other activities, like furring: the whole expedition was conceived as a "voyage", and the servants were provisioned and supplied as a boat crew would be. The theft and vandalism of fishing equipment were common enough occurrences. What was unusual, in this instance, was that both the civil and criminal issues came to trial.⁴ The expedition itself and its legal consequences fell naturally into the accentuated annual rhythm of the early-modern North Atlantic fishery. The case can serve as an entrée to both the spatial and the temporal structures of the English Shore.

After ten days coasting around the Avalon Peninsula in Pollard's shalloway, the six fishing servants arrived in St. Mary's Bay, "where the French fish". They were reluctant to meet these competitors, for reasons Wallis frankly admitted under examination:

Being in a French shalloway they would not put in there, least [the French] should take their boat from them, itt being usuall for the English that went that way a furring, if the boat they carried out with them proved defective, to take a better of the Frenches shalloways ... and supposing [their own vessel] had formerly been taken upon that account, they would not put in there.

So instead they went to Colinet, "a place likewise where the French fish".

Landing at Colinet, they “staved their boat”, which was quite a coincidence, since the French had left four shalloways and ten shallops at that very spot. They launched a “new” French shalloway, put their remaining provisions into it, and anchored it with *killicks*.⁵ The next day, four of them took one of the French shallops and headed up a creek to hunt. They shot a few birds and an otter and found more French fishing gear, hidden in a pond. A gale came up, and it was days before the hunters could return to camp, where their mates had not been able to prevent the shalloway (and their provisions in it) from destruction in the storm. So they launched yet another French shalloway and left the smaller French shallop they had used for hunting to the mercy of the waves. After a month at Colinet, they headed out of the bay to St. Mary’s, taking with them about 20 fir rinds, probably from the roof of a seasonal shelter. Jean Ducarret, the Frenchman whose premises they had looted, would accuse them of burning his cabin, but they swore they had done “no other mischief”, besides the theft of the rinds and vessels.

At St. Mary’s they covered a train-vat with the rinds, “to make themselves a little shelter in the dead time of winter”. (It was mid-December by the modern calendar.) They lived in this cod liver oil-impregnated box for three weeks, subsisting on shore birds. Wood and Wallis later swore that they “did noe dammage to anything of the French concerns” but admitted that they took 400 to 500 pounds of iron spikes and nails (about 200 kg). These, they claimed, they had “cut out of drift timber which came from stages”. After a difficult voyage, they arrived back in Caplin Bay, where they delivered the new shalloway to Christopher Pollard on 31 December 1679. They shared out the scavenged iron; their backer, John Roulston, took Wood’s share, as well as the furs the men had managed to bag on their 15-week expedition: 13 fox, seven otter and four beaver.⁶

Late the following July, the aggrieved French fishing master, Jean Ducarret, came to Trepassey, the English settlement closest to St. Mary’s Bay, to complain that an English crew had destroyed two new shalloways, three shallops and his cabin. Aaron Browning and Robert Fishly, masters of the *Exchange* of Bideford and the *Standerbay* of Barnstaple, were the fishing admirals there; that is, they were the masters who had arrived first in Trepassey that year and were therefore empowered by the Western Charter to settle such disputes.⁷ They agreed to look into the case. Meanwhile, Ducarret gave power of attorney to George Perriman, a major planter in Trepassey, to retrieve the stolen vessel from the Caplin Bay planter, Christopher Pollard. In late August, Perriman wrote George Kirke of Renews, then the major planter on the south Avalon, delegating power of attorney to retrieve the stolen shalloway. Before acting, Kirke awaited the legal decision of the two fishing admirals. By late September, the decision had been made. The English planters, Pollard and Roulston, bound themselves to repay Ducarret for his damages, estimated at £50 to £60. The exact figure was to be negotiated, with the fishing admiral at Trepassey acting as “umpire”. This bond was probably signed at Trepassey; at any rate it was witnessed by a Frenchman, Daniel Darmelly, as well as by George

Kirke. The Trepassey fishing admirals, Browning and Fishly, filed a report with the Royal Navy commodore, Sir Robert Robinson, at Bay Bulls, as did Kirke. On 29 September 1680, a year after the whole affair began, the English fishing masters Browning and Fishly held criminal court with Captain Robinson and another naval officer on board HMS *Assistance* and passed sentence on four of the furriers to be “duck att the maine yard arme of the shipp”.⁸

The case of the furriers’ boats is full of suggestive details. As the weather began to close in and migratory fishermen prepared to return across the Atlantic, some hid their gear in ponds. Others, who had decided to over-winter, had seasonal strategies for making a little extra cash and these strategies could require mobility along the English Shore or even beyond its permeable bounds. It says something about fishing servants’ usual room and board that they were willing to live in an oily wooden box on a diet of shore-birds. The repeated thefts and casual vandalism underline the fact that extra-legal conflicts were not simply an internal problem between the migratory and resident sectors of the English fishery but part of a larger pattern of physical competition among all participants in the cod fishery. The St. John’s merchant, John Downing, acknowledged that in the early years of settlement “some English inhabitants would burne the Frenchmans boates, carry away some, carry away their salt, break open their houses, and riffle them”.⁹ Wallis’ frank testimony strongly suggests that the planned theft of French boats was still common. The scavenging of iron from French stages, even supposing these had already been damaged by weather, turned out to be an important part of the expedition. Given that the limited bag of furs would have been worth about £15, while the iron was worth something like £10 and the new shalloway at least £15, the plan to go “a furring” was, evidently, little more than a cover for a scavenging expedition.¹⁰

It is politically significant that the English actually acted on Ducarret’s complaint. The sentence calls the punishment “a publick example to all others in this Island”. This may have been an attempt to remedy a previous, more tenuous, rule of law: Wallis’ testimony indicates that scavenging, at least on French rooms, was considered a legitimate winter activity by the English inhabitants. George Kirke’s function in this case as a sort of justice of the peace, or at least as a notary and representative of south Avalon planter interests, suggests that the Kirke family continued to function as local patrons, a quarter of a century after the death of Sir David Kirke. His role was very much that of the gatekeeper *cum* mediator: it was to him that the Trepassey planter turned for recovery of the shalloway; he witnessed the bonds that the receivers of the stolen goods were asked to sign; and he provided the naval officers with an assessment of the Frenchman’s losses. The younger Kirke was the one person involved in the episode who dealt with the French, the officers who passed sentence, and the planters who made reparations.¹¹

The eventual resolution of the case is instructive too. Although the crimes occurred in early winter, no one thought to deal with them until after the busy spring and well into the middle of the following summer, when the fishing season was be-

ginning to shape up and when those with the power to respond might be expected to have time to deal with such issues. Time did not stand still for planters or their servants, who faced seasonal tasks driven but not exclusively determined by the production of salt cod.

THE SEASONAL CYCLE

The annual cycle of the European settlements in Newfoundland inevitably paralleled the seasonal cycle of the migratory fishery. In a sense, the latter drove the former. But the nine months between August and June were not the period of indolence that seventeenth-century opponents of settlement feared or that historians have sometimes, too hastily, assumed.¹² Like seasonal workers in other new trades, Newfoundland planters soon devised dual employments.¹³ They included lumbering, boat-building (or scavenging for French boats), agriculture and what today would be called the hospitality industry. These secondary sectors had a close relationship to the fishery. Even the trade in furs and skins, which was not directly linked to the fishery, was structured by the staple industry. Although overshadowed by the fishery, the other components of the nascent Newfoundland economy were critically important to the inhabitants, for they could not live by fish alone.

The nine-month inshore fishery envisaged by some proponents of settlement was not actually possible on the English Shore, since cod did not appear in abundance on the east coast of the Avalon Peninsula much before June and were gone by November (although French settlers based in Placentia Bay were able to fish in the spring).¹⁴ The resident fishing season on the English Shore did extend into the fall. According to Captain Poole, "After the fishers are returned home, which is about the midst of September, the planters begin to fish again and carry on the trade to the fine of October following (longer or sooner as the season permits). The fish then caught if well cured proves the best of all the yeares, and is called winter fish."¹⁵

The eighteenth century would see some diversification from cod to other species, particularly salmon and, later, seals. Newfoundland exported some salmon in the seventeenth century (to Venice, among other markets) but this trade was not, as yet, significant.¹⁶ In any event, the salmon fishery takes place in mid-summer. It would become, in some northern districts, an alternative to the cod fishery, but it could not provide a living in the off-season. How, then, did planters occupy themselves through the fall, winter and spring, year after year, as they waited for the fish and the ships fishing to return?

In late summer and early fall Newfoundland is, for a month or two, a relatively rich environment. The early promoter of settlement, Richard Whitbourne, emphasized the plenty of berries and their health benefits.¹⁷ Raspberries, blueberries, and partridgeberries are everywhere. No one survived on berries, of course, but they were a healthy addition to a traditional maritime diet, which lacked good sources of

vitamin C, besides the turnip.¹⁸ Fall is a good time, too, for hunting. Early accounts of Newfoundland stressed the availability of “deer”, i.e. woodland caribou, *Rangifer tarandus*.¹⁹ This emphasis reflected, in part, release from class-based legal restrictions on the hunt in the home country.²⁰ Although caribou were common in the south Avalon and on the Bay de Verde peninsula between Conception and Trinity Bays in the early seventeenth century, they became scarcer as the century wore on. They remained part of the subsistence economy, with catches in various seasons of trout, salmon, eel, mackerel, flounder, mussels, lobster, bear, beaver, hare, otter, seal, ducks, geese, pigeons, and ptarmigan, not to mention the sea birds, like murre, auk, loon, puffin, and eider duck, on which the servant scavengers in the case of the furriers’ boat dined for over a month, in the late fall of 1679.²¹

Such expeditions had aims that went beyond subsistence. Beaver and otter were also hunted commercially for furs, as were muskrat, fox, ermine, marten and lynx. Sixteenth-century fishermen had traded with the Beothuk for skins: in 1598 the 30-ton *Grace* of Bristol came home from Newfoundland with 60 “deer skins”.²² Early residents were certainly aware of the potential value of furs and skins and by the 1640s they were involved in furring.²³ The emergence of *furriers* or fur trappers of European origin, in the seventeenth century, tended to isolate the Beothuk economically. Over-winterers went “with their trapps and gunns a furring”, thus promoting European settlement and thereby increasing competition for coastal resources, although in the short term these expeditions provided the Beothuk with further opportunities for scavenging iron in the form of trap parts.²⁴ References to beaver in the south Avalon suggest that furring was common there as late as the 1660s and the case of the furriers’ boats makes it plain that in the 1670s it was still “usuall for some of the English” from that region to go furring in St. Mary’s Bay.²⁵ Ships returning from the fishery sometimes arrived in England with respectable cargoes of furs: Mark Bickford imported 25 “catts skinns” (i.e. lynx), 20 beaver, 69 otter and 13 “ordinary fox skinns” on the *Unity* of Dartmouth in October 1666.²⁶ Contemporary estimates of the annual value of the trade towards the end of the seventeenth century ranged as high as £2000. In the 1680s, Captain Francis Wheler found the fur trade “not inconsiderable”, at least regionally, although Captain James Story put it at about £500 (perhaps \$100,000 today) “most att Bonavista and farther northerly”.²⁷ According to Story:

The planters go out a furring about the middle of September and live in the woods but carry with them no provisions only bread and salt, for they find food bevers, otters, and seales enough to feed on which they kill with gunns they alwayes carry with them and likewise they kill a great deale of veneson, which they salt upp and it serves them for their winter provision and then turne back to their habitations by the first of May.²⁸

In fact, the “gangs of men” who went to “stay in the woods all the winter” were more often fishing servants, as in the case of the furriers’ boats, rather than planters themselves.

Planters were more likely to remain close to salt water, where they could invest time working on the infrastructure of the fishery, particularly fishing boats. John Downing boasted that Newfoundland fishing shallops were “built in the country ... of the country wood”. Migratory crews took it for granted that they would be able to buy boats or the lumber to build them in Newfoundland.²⁹ These industries were of long standing: John Guy and George Calvert both had boats built locally for their fishing operations.³⁰ Captain Poole explained why this industry made the planters particularly useful to the fishers: “All the winter they employ their people in the woods to fell trees to saw into boards to build boats and make oars against the next season, that the fishers may be accommodated to begin their fishing as soone as they arrive”.³¹ In his 1678 defense of settlement, Nehemiah Troute emphasized that lumbering by the inhabitants made possible the building of boats, a “privilege” the English enjoyed in Newfoundland, while the French brought their boats from France, “they having not the advantage of his Majesties forest”.³² On the English Shore, two local industries, lumbering and boat-building, were thus linked in series to the requirements of staple production.³³

By the later seventeenth century, these related wood industries had become important off-season activities for the planters. Consider the construction of fishing shallops: these were made of softwoods, had little protection from the elements, and were given hard use. Their average working life was no more than five to eight years.³⁴ The planters were operating about 300 boats in the 1670s, the migratory fishermen about 900. These figures imply a demand for about 200 boats a year, in a period when there were only about that many planter households. Boat-building must have been an important activity for many of these households for several months every year. Although boat-building was worth less than 5 percent of the wholesale value of fish produced by the planters, it probably accounted for roughly 20 percent of their net incomes.³⁵ Similar conjectural estimates could be made for the production of oars or the cutting of timber for stages, cook rooms, train-vats and flakes. Ships fishing exported significant cargoes of timber to the West Country in the early eighteenth century and as early as 1684 Captain Wheler thought Newfoundland’s forests were over-exploited. Wood industries were a significant part of the planter economy.³⁶ One of the advantages of these forest occupations was their timing, in late winter and early spring, when there is still some snow in the woods and before mosquitoes and black flies have hatched. At this season, Newfoundland fisherfolk also had to turn their minds to agricultural pursuits, for which there would be less time, once the fishing season was under way.

Newfoundland’s agricultural limitations impress visitors from regions better favoured agriculturally and seventeenth-century visitors were no exception. As Captain Wheler put it, cynically, “The colony is not able to support itself, the

earth, or rather the rock, producing nothing for the life of man.”³⁷ In fact, hardy vegetables and grains and the suite of domestic animals that have followed northern Europeans since the Bronze Age could be raised on the English Shore without much difficulty. Seventeenth-century settlements in Newfoundland were situated to access marine resources, but, where good soil was available, this resource was exploited as well.³⁸ Although the commercial value of agricultural products was not high, they answered specific local needs. Most historians have admitted as much, even if some have exhibited an unreflective skepticism about agriculture in early Newfoundland.³⁹ The quasi-Marxist claim that West Country fishing interests discouraged agriculture, as part of a strategy of class domination, is even more implausible.⁴⁰ The evidence for this interpretation is scant and the argument depends on ignoring the agriculture that did exist on the English Shore. There is no need for a complex explanation of why Newfoundland’s agricultural development was constrained in the early modern period: it could not compete with the fishery. As Sir Robert Robinson put it in 1680, more arable and pasture land could be created “but tis not done by reason the fishing trade is more profitable”.⁴¹ Labour was not available for agriculture in the English mode. “Servants wages are soe excessive, that clearing ground, and sewing corne will not be to profit”, Captain Charles Talbot argued, in 1679.⁴² The point is well taken: Newfoundland fishermen could earn much more than contemporary farm laborers.⁴³ These reports somewhat exaggerated, however, the preponderance of the fishery.

Newfoundland planters were, in fact, active gardeners who had, as John Downing boasted, “cleansed the wilderness” and kept livestock, in particular pigs and cattle.⁴⁴ In 1677, 80 percent of the planter households in St. John’s, for example, had gardens, some of them more than one garden, so that there were even more gardens than households.⁴⁵ Crops included peas, beans, lettuce, radishes, carrots, turnips, cabbages, and, occasionally, oats, rye, and barley.⁴⁶ Since grains ship well and could be produced more cheaply in England itself, vegetables took precedence, as the experienced Conception Bay planter Nicholas Guy indicated, in 1626, when he recommended, to those intending to settle, “seede for all sortes of garden herbes and rootes for the kitchen”.⁴⁷ Early colonists realized that vegetables were important in the control of scurvy. Although they had no clear idea of what it was that anti-scorbutics provided, contemporaries with an interest in settlement understood that a staple diet of bread, peas and salt meat put health at risk.⁴⁸ Gardens therefore filled an important health function in the seventeenth-century Newfoundland subsistence economy.

Livestock played a larger role in the commercial economy. In the Conception Bay, St. John’s and south Avalon areas, most planters kept swine. That this was already taken to be the norm in the 1640s is suggested by the annual rent Sir David Kirke imposed on planters: £3 6s 8d “and a fatt hogg”.⁴⁹ Swine husbandry is an efficient sideline for fish processors, since swine can be fed on fish offal. More than half the planters in 1677 kept more than five hogs.⁵⁰ Keeping five hogs might, con-

ceivably, be construed as a subsistence activity, but the 30 swine Edward Haine kept at Petty Harbour or the 20 the younger David Kirke kept at Ferryland were clearly commercial ventures. In 1677, about a quarter of Conception Bay, St. John's and south Avalon planters kept more than ten hogs. Cattle were even more clustered in distribution. Most planters did not keep cows, but of the 30 percent who did, only a few kept one or two. Not all herds were as large as John Downing's 35 head at St. John's but the average herd consisted of eight cattle there and herds were even larger in Conception Bay. Such figures are enough to suggest something verging on commercial agriculture, in which context we might note export of hides to the West Country, for example to Barnstaple in 1664, as well as the large cow byre excavated at Ferryland, with its impressive archaeological assemblage of north Devon and south Somerset coarse earthenware milk pans.⁵¹

Cattle and swine were probably both kept primarily as sources of fat, a key nutritional requirement, lacking in a diet based on fish taken from the sea and on the import of peas, bread and malt. Butter could be imported from the British Isles, of course, and was: the baluster-shaped tall pots produced in North Devon for the shipment of butter are the most common ceramic form recovered from seventeenth-century archaeological contexts at Ferryland.⁵² On the other hand, commercial butter was "under a bad repute", in the mid-seventeenth century, because of abuses in packing, over-salting and weighing — a situation that particularly affected maritime victualling.⁵³ There was an incentive, then, in seventeenth-century Newfoundland, to keep cattle for dairy products, as they were generally kept at this time in England itself. Although early modern swine were certainly valued for roasting when they were small, "great pigges" or "fatt hoggs" were, essentially, ambulatory stores of fat. Like the cattle of the bigger planters, the hogs that the great majority of planter households raised were animal mechanisms for transforming available resources into fat, something that was otherwise an expensive import.

The livestock agriculture practiced by most planters might be seen as subsistence, since the produce would have been consumed largely within their own households. On the other hand, planter households were themselves commercial operations, one of the functions of which was to serve the migratory fishery. The average numbers of cattle and pigs owned exceeded, by far, the numbers kept by most rural households in the West of England and livestock products, like butter, inevitably found a market among crews visiting Newfoundland.⁵⁴

An early hospitality industry was the most important of the secondary economic sectors driven by the economic pump of the migratory fishery. Proponents of settlement emphasized the aid inhabitants gave to fishermen separated from their ships early in the season, or to those sick or injured. Captain Poole told the Committee for Trade and Plantations that when ships bound for the fishery encountered ice or unfavorable winds: "they usually dispatch away their boates to take possession of the harbour (for first come, first served) whilst they get upp with their ships, which sometimes they cannot doe in ten or 12 days tyme".⁵⁵ Poole asked the Com-

mittee to consider “what would become of such poore men at such a cold season, if they were not releevd by the planters?” He also pointed out that migratory fishers, once they reached their fishing rooms, were dependent on Newfoundlanders, should they fall sick: “Heere are no other nurseries for them but the planters houses, which are allways at their service, and their wives to attend them”.⁵⁶

Opponents of the Newfoundland plantation stressed a different aspect of planter hospitality. Almost every home in Newfoundland functioned as a tippling house, providing fishermen with their preferred luxuries, tobacco and alcohol. In seventeenth-century England, working people found temporary accommodation and alcohol in a single institution, the alehouse. So it was nothing out of the ordinary, if Newfoundland planters operated tippling houses that combined the functions of the modern boarding house and tavern. The boarding function came to seem more important in the eighteenth century and the term *dieter* evolved to describe fishermen who over-wintered with planters who were not their masters. The retailing of wine and tobacco were relatively more important earlier.⁵⁷

That certain investors in the migratory fishery took a puritanically dim view of the commercial hospitality that planters regularly extended to fishermen does not, of course, diminish the value of these services to those who worked day in and day out, lodged in rough accommodations, in what can be a cold and damp environment. Tippling houses were part of the infrastructure of home ports like Dartmouth, why not of fishing stations?⁵⁸ Once cod arrived inshore, practical constraints on the timing of commercially-viable operations condemned both shore and boat crews to a rigid schedule and intensive labour.⁵⁹ This might mean going with little sleep. As the Plymouth surgeon James Yonge observed, “Sometimes the boys are so tired with labour they will steal off and hide under the flakes, or get into the woods and sleep 3 or 4 hours, so hearty that they feel not the muscetos, who by the time he wakes shall have swoln him blind”.⁶⁰ Downing wrote that crews might work “from Sunday night to Saturday night resting onlie in ther beds onlie Saturday night. Some rest not it: the dayes except Sundayes they atend codd catching”.⁶¹ Since Sundays were the sole regular break enjoyed by crews on the English Shore, it is not surprising that tension developed around the issue of whether those days were to be passed in prayer or with a bottle of wine. Nor is it hard to understand why planters came to be identified with what we might think of as the consumer option.⁶²

In such matters, the English Shore closely resembled regions elsewhere, in which migratory fisheries depended, in part, on the presence of a certain number of permanent residents, who were in turn dependent on their seasonal visitors. In the seventeenth century, similar regional economies included Maine, then seasonally exploited by fishermen from southern New England; southern Iceland, then exploited by both English and French fishers; western Ireland, still an important fishery for West Country crews, who had used the region since the preceding century; the Lofoten Islands, off northwestern Norway, used by fishermen from other parts of the country; and the Novgorod coast of Russia’s White Sea, where Dutch fisher-

men arrived every summer to set up fishing camps in an environment remarkably similar to Newfoundland.⁶³ To varying degrees, these were all places outside regular political administration, where the rule of law was reputed to be problematic. In each, a similar symbiosis emerged between transient seamen and hospitable residents who were ready to help the seasonal visitors turn fish into wine.

ECONOMIC CULTURE

The early planter fishery at Newfoundland can usefully be seen as a *vernacular* industry, like its migratory predecessor. This terminology emphasizes the local and traditional nature of such industries, in which labour and capital markets were narrowly circumscribed and the operation of the industry depended on collective community experience.⁶⁴ Low entry cost is a significant characteristic of vernacular industry. The capital resources required by merchants trading the products of the new regional industries of the period were not needed by producers, who were often men of relatively modest means.⁶⁵ Low entry cost was typical of the planter and bye-boat-keeping sectors of the Newfoundland fishery. (Bye-boat keepers were fishing masters who kept one or two boats in Newfoundland but who migrated annually to the fishery by taking passage on a ship carrying its own crew to the fishery.) The technique of raising necessary capital by shares — for ships, provisions and labour costs — made it possible for these early industrial enterprises to be completely financed within a restricted region.⁶⁶ Robert Hitchcock had described vernacular finances in 1580: “in the West country ... the fishermen conferres with the money man, who furnisheth them with money to provide victualls, salte, and all other needfull thinges, to be paied twentie five pounds at the shippes returne upon the hundredth pounce”.⁶⁷ Some of these money men were themselves borrowers, all part of a great chain of credit.⁶⁸ A century later, boat-keepers raised capital in exactly the same fashion, if at slightly higher rates, as did the merchants who owned and provisioned “fishing ships”.⁶⁹

Like other successful early modern fisheries, English enterprise at Newfoundland in this period was financed, organized, and manned in atomistic vernacular modules.⁷⁰ At first glance, the activities of Sir David Kirke and his fellow Newfoundland patentees of 1637 look like an exception to this generalization: as sack ship merchants, they were managers and major share-holders of a project for a directed commercial monopoly.⁷¹ To the extent that they became involved in fish production, however, the Kirkes relied on a distinctly vernacular development in mid-seventeenth-century Newfoundland, the settlement of resident producers. As these vernacular production units formed in an isolated resource periphery, they were inevitably enmeshed in patron-client relationships, which are above all a way of mediating unspecialized, weakly developed, and disorganized producers with

wider markets.⁷² A particular economic culture favored a particular social relationship.

The mode of production that emerged among the planter inhabitants of the seventeenth-century English Shore bears a close resemblance to the proto-industrial “putting-out” system.⁷³ This system, in which raw materials were advanced to household production units and finished goods returned to the entrepreneur, had developed in late medieval textile industries. The system began to spread to other crafts industries in the late sixteenth century, and first became well-established in the mid-seventeenth century.⁷⁴ Producers in the Newfoundland putting-out industry made fish, not cloth, or nails. To do this, they accepted advances from merchants for outfitting their boats and provisioning themselves and their servants. Even if they were smaller than the migratory ships’ crews engaged in the fishery, Newfoundland planter production units were large, relative to the households of yeomen and craftsmen in the old country. Fishing plantations were, nevertheless, extended households, at least within the contemporary perspective, expressed unambiguously in the naval censuses of the later seventeenth century. Merchants must have begun supplying Newfoundland planter producers on credit almost as soon as the original colonial proprietors, like George Calvert, withdrew their support for colonization. The credit system meshed perfectly with the kind of patron-client network developed by David Kirke. He was, in fact, criticized for supplying the planters in the 1640s and had, likely, introduced this mode of production to the south Avalon.⁷⁵ At any rate, something like it was certainly wide-spread in Newfoundland by 1670 and probably decades before.

In many respects, the seventeenth-century English Shore resembled England’s new regional concentrations of industry, which were often located in woodland districts, in areas of uncertain jurisdiction. The Newfoundland planter fishery was typical of these proto-industrial regions in several ways. It came into being with the extension of an international market for a mass-produced good: England’s southern markets for fish had expanded rapidly in the late sixteenth century. The proto-industrial specialization of the English Shore promoted the symbiotic development of “adjacent” agricultural regions: successively, the West Country, southeastern Ireland, New England and Lower Canada. It was organized by merchants in “nearby” towns: successively, the West Country ports — particularly Dartmouth, Plymouth and Barnstaple — later Salem, Massachusetts, as well, and eventually St. John’s, in Newfoundland itself. Finally, the proto-industrial household combined production with other subsistence activities in a seasonal cycle. On the English Shore, woods industries, including particularly boat building and pastoral agriculture, played key roles. The transatlantic migratory fisheries themselves have been characterized as proto-industrial, which is apt at least in the sense that fishing stations were “unmechanized seasonal factories”.⁷⁶ The planter fishery was, however, closer to what most historians mean by proto-industry, in which household production units depended on alternative seasonal subsistence activities in the industrial

region itself.⁷⁷ The development of a rural planter fishery in a region previously dominated by a migratory fishery based in towns was typical of the marked seventeenth-century shift in favour of rural production. As elsewhere, the development of proto-industrial household production units in Newfoundland probably had much to do with the demand for cheaper labour in a period of economic crisis.

Patron-client credit relations later became known, in Newfoundland, as the *truck system*. In the seventeenth century, “truck” simply meant barter, taking on, in the eighteenth century, the narrower sense of a system of payment in kind in lieu of wages. In nineteenth-century Newfoundland, “truck” referred to a system in which merchants advanced provisions to nominally independent producers, on credit, against the expected catch of the ensuing season.⁷⁸ Its distinguishing feature was not that it was a credit relationship, for these were pervasive in early modern times, but that it was a credit relationship with an annual rhythm in which creditors had first claim on the seasonal product of debtors. Such arrangements were widespread, whether the product on which credit was based was tobacco, as in the Chesapeake, fur, as on the Canadian Shield, or fish, as in Newfoundland or New England, in its early decades.⁷⁹ What was most distinctive about Newfoundland’s version of the once widespread practice of patron-client credit was its persistence well into the twentieth century.⁸⁰ Although the term “truck” was not used in its modern Newfoundland sense until the 1800s, many of its essential features were already in place in the seventeenth century.

The credit terms that later became locally known as the *truck system* were first legally recognized in Newfoundland in the 1680s, though evidently in use before that time. In 1681, the London merchant William Miles petitioned the Committee for Trade and Plantations to instruct the Royal Navy to send a ship into Trinity Bay, to enforce collection of £800 worth of fish from planters in New Perlican, Heart’s Content and Scilly Cove, due in exchange for salt and salt meat, supplied on credit in 1679 by John Vallet, master of the *Pembrooke* of London. When Vallet returned to Trinity Bay on behalf of Miles in the *Elizabeth* of London in 1680, these planters had offered him fish worth only £50. The Lords of Trade and Plantations agreed, on consideration of the “encouragement it will be to such as carry on that trade that they bee not defrauded of their just rights” to enforce the debt. The settlement imposed by the British government, through the Royal Navy, enforced the custom that indebted planters were to supply “merchantable Newfoundland fish” to their creditors, an essential feature of what later generations of Newfoundlanders would know as the truck system.⁸¹ We may assume that this principle had characterized patron-client relations on the English Shore since the development of a planter fishery. In the 1690s, Pastour de Costebelle, Governor of Plaisance, clarified the distinctive feature of this system of credit:

The English have a precaution in the truck trade [*la commerce de la troque*] which cannot be costly for them, nor for those whom they supply, which is that each planter

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marries his merchant. This term, which [the English] use and which is rather significant, amounts to saying that they do not trade except with one another. One side undertakes to give all his catch and the other to furnish all the commodities and equipment necessary for his support. The merchant involved in such an account never risks a loss, the catch being ordinarily abundant enough to account for what the work consumes, when it is done with a bit of economy. If it works out to the profit of the planter, [the merchant] pays him, as one might expect, for the surplus of fish at the current price.⁸²

Late seventeenth-century visitors to the English Shore often commented on the chronic indebtedness of planters to merchants. The credit system they were noticing was not a novelty of this period, however; what had changed was the ability of the average planter to keep accounts in balance from year to year. As Captain James Story noted in 1681, the influx of Irish servant girls encouraged fishing servants to marry and remain in Newfoundland, swelling the ranks of the smallest production units and least financially secure inhabitants, who “being extremely poor contract such debts as they are not able to pay”.⁸³ During a crisis in the fish trade, in 1684, Captain Wheler noted:

By certaine experience there is hardly a planter in the country but is a greate deale worse then nothing and although they are allmost sure to loose, yett they must goe on, or else the marchants wont sell them provisions to live in the winter, which they [the merchants] part with at greate profit, and soe are able to beare some losses.⁸⁴

Apparently, debt had reached crisis levels. In 1701, Captain Larkin thought Newfoundland’s inhabitants a “poor, indigent and withall a profuse sort of people”, who did not care how fast or far they went into debt.⁸⁵

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the English Shore had close economic parallels with coastal New England, but these regional economies diverged before the century was out. Until the closing decades of the century, merchants involved with the inshore shallow fishery of Massachusetts outfitted a clientele of quasi-independent producers using a system of credit similar to Newfoundland’s. When fish prices began to sag, after 1675, the merchants of Salem and Marblehead tightened the credit they gave boat fishermen and began to use their capital, instead, to invest seriously in their own larger vessels, to pursue the new, offshore, bank fishery. To the extent that capital previously “buried” in long-term credit relations between merchants and a clientele of small producers was freed up, and to the extent that a labour market no longer constrained by personal dependency could function with increased efficiency, this shift certainly represented a kind of regional economic development for New England.⁸⁶ Although there were some, limited, parallel developments on the English Shore after 1713, when small ships began to exploit offshore banks, such economic modernization was long delayed in Newfoundland and in Atlantic Canada generally.⁸⁷ This delay was not, however, neces-

sarily inefficient, given France's jealously defended stake in the Grand Banks fishery; the magnitude of the inshore fish stocks around Newfoundland, easily accessible by boat; and the continued demand in southern Europe for traditionally cured dry fish, which could be produced only by an inshore fishery. Ships are not, simply by definition, more efficient than boats, which are much cheaper to build, after all. A ship fishery certainly creates an occasion for respectable accumulations of profit by ship-owners — but profit is not the same thing as efficiency, unless social costs and ecological constraints are ignored.

Seventeenth-century Newfoundland was, nevertheless, not a capital-intensive, low-wage, plantation economy, like the West Indies or the Chesapeake.⁸⁸ Newfoundland merchants made substantial profits, not by the super-exploitation of labour kept at a subsistence minimum but by cultivation of profitable trade with a clientele of reasonably successful, credit-worthy, small producers.⁸⁹ Fishers were, almost by definition, relatively poor men (who else would risk life and limb for an unpredictable livelihood?) — but they were not the poorest of men. Contemporary visitors to the English Shore repeatedly commented on the high wages common there and small planters did well enough to attract further settlement, at least until the 1680s. Skilled Newfoundland fishermen could expect incomes in the order of 150 percent of those paid ordinary Atlantic seamen.⁹⁰ Both planters and ships fishing expanded their use of unskilled crewmen, who were paid fixed wages rather than shares, between 1660 and 1680. Late in the century, unskilled Irish labour began to be drawn into the Newfoundland fishery.⁹¹ These trends suggest that the long-term increase in fishermen's pay put pressure on small producers that could be ignored only as long as fish prices continued to rise. These small planter production units participated efficiently in the Newfoundland cod fishery in the 1660s and 1670s. Why then did the economic expansion of the English Shore collapse, as it did in the 1680s?

The natural environment into which the Newfoundland fishery had intruded, productive as it was, had its own limits. When fishers approached or exceeded the maximum sustainable catch for specific species they inevitably had to face the consequences of human impact on stocks. The large marine mammals were affected first: by 1600 Europeans had depleted the walrus and the right whale in Newfoundland waters.⁹² Although the whole northern cod stock was not at risk in the seventeenth century, in the sense that it would be in the twentieth, fishing effort in some periods appears to have already reached levels that affected local stocks. For example, a severe drop in catches occurred in 1683, following a decade or two of rapid expansion of the inshore fishery on the English Shore.⁹³

Another natural limit on the traditional inshore fishery lay in the geography of the English Shore itself, with its shortage of useful land. The over-supply of land in most of colonial North America, relative to the contemporary scarcity of labour, has provided economic historians with an explanatory Swiss Army knife, useful on many occasions, to explain why wages were high, agricultural improvements slow,

or credit limited. This analysis is not very applicable to Newfoundland, despite its vast tracts of forest and taiga. For an inshore fishing master, the only land that really mattered was his fishing room, that is, a place close to fishing grounds where a small boat could be safely brought to shore. Although there were many productive fishing rooms on the east coast of the Avalon Peninsula, their numbers were limited and, by the 1640s, fishing crews were in conflict over them. Of course, planter boat-keepers, with their interests in livestock husbandry and woods industries, had an interest in a wider range of land. Still, good land for gardens and pastures was in short supply in Newfoundland, and even forest land was not always easily accessible. In a sense, the scarcity of useful land resulted in a surplus of labour every fall. On the other hand, the fluid Atlantic labour market drained fishing servants from Newfoundland with the rhythm of an annual ebb tide.⁹⁴ Observers at the time thought that the shortage of productive fishing rooms limited the growth of the old English Shore.⁹⁵

The economic culture of the English Shore itself perhaps limited the adaptability of the resident fishery. The tendency of planters to disperse disposable income on imported consumables would have acted as a restraint on economic diversification. The fisherfolk of the seventeenth-century North American littoral were particularly fond of wine, brandy, and tobacco. These goods were easily available; economically attractive because of their portability, divisibility and high unit value; and culturally useful in a number of ways, particularly as symbols of warmth and sociability.⁹⁶ Consumption of such imported luxuries was, in aggregate, a drain on the regional economy. Indeed, had Newfoundland planters and their crews spent more of their earnings on a locally produced good, for example housing, the economic development of the English Shore might have been advanced — but only in the counterfactual world-without-context of the thought experiment. In the seventeenth century that we know from documents and archaeological remains, fisherfolk exhibited an irreducible demand for alcohol and tobacco and appear to have had limited ambitions for better housing.⁹⁷ They were a significant part of the market for wine, the export of which permitted regions like the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Islands to import salt fish, among other goods. This exchange furthered development of the European world economy if, by the same token, it furthered a dependence on staple production in peripheries like Newfoundland and semi-peripheries like southern Europe.⁹⁸

However smooth the exchange of fish and wine had become, the economic expansion of the English Shore collapsed in the 1680s. What obstacle to growth had Newfoundland encountered? The explanation lies in the very way its economy had previously grown. Newfoundland was settled as the international division of labour intensified. It was a classic case of economic adaptation to production of a single staple: a sub-arctic island that could barely support a medieval level of self-sufficiency was instead put to its most efficient use, the production of salt fish, with the result that wealthier households there could live well enough to raise the

eyebrows of European visitors. An instructive comparison might be made with Iceland, where a colony of isolated Europeans spent centuries of cultural anguish before they admitted to themselves, in the nineteenth century, that they were fishermen as well as farmers. Icelandic law and custom had traditionally taken a dim view of permanent fishing stations and put difficulties in the way of those who moved seasonally to work in the fishery.⁹⁹ The English Shore was a society with no such doubts about its economic function in the wider scheme of things, certainly not in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁰ When the fish trade did well, so did the fisherfolk of the English Shore. A crisis in the trade, on the other hand, spelled serious trouble. The terrible economic truth was that the planter fishery was part of an international economy and could be threatened in distant markets, or by shifts in fish stocks, as seriously as by a determined invasion. Further development of the English Shore might have been limited, in some sense, by the confinement of capital and labour within traditional credit clientage, by coastal geography, or even by the character of its imports, but the very existence of the Newfoundland plantation was continually at risk because the isolated local economy depended on production of a single staple, subject to significant fluctuations in availability and price. Like their Native predecessors, Europeans in seventeenth-century Newfoundland were limited by worst cases in an unstable environment.¹⁰¹

The reports of the naval commodores, from 1684 to the turn of the century, suggest that Newfoundland experienced a tightening of credit in this period, which eliminated or impoverished the larger planters and left the typical, indebted, smaller planter, “a kind of servant to the merchant men”, as Captain John Norris put it in 1698.¹⁰² The case of Ferryland/Caplin Bay is instructive. An important settlement through most of the seventeenth century, it consisted of a dozen or so plantations in the 1670s, most of them larger than average. Many “big planters”, including Ferryland’s, suffered setbacks in the 1680s, and only eight plantations, of about half the previous size, are reported there in the early 1690s, before a recovery by the time of the French attack of 1696. In other words, an economic crisis in the 1680s had just as great an impact on growth as the war of the ensuing decade.¹⁰³

The seriousness of this crisis is thrown into relief by the recovery of the Newfoundland fishery from the doldrums of the 1660s and early 1670s. The English fishery grew significantly between 1675 and 1682, with the planters expanding a bit more rapidly than the migratory sector. The Newfoundland censuses of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, adjusted for their variable scope, indicate a steady growth in effort during peacetime, until about 1684, when participation in the migratory fishery dropped by more than half from the level of roughly 800 boats, typical of the early 1680s, to about 300. Even the planters, who had no real alternative to participation in the fishery, reduced their commitment of boats by 10 or 20 percent at this time.¹⁰⁴ This serious decline in fishing effort in the mid-1680s resulted in part from a renewed scarcity of fish. Catch rates had fallen in the early 1680s, so that by 1682 the area south of St John’s reported catches of only about 150

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quintals a boat, three-quarters of the catch that fishing masters normally expected. In February 1683, Captain Charles Talbot reported that investors in the migratory fishery were:

so discouraged by the ill success they have had of late yeares, that many of them have laid upp their ships by the wall and more threaten. Theyre being limited to fish betwixt the Capes de Ray [Cape Race] and Bonavista is the reason of their ill success, for though there be harbours and convenience on shoare for the making of fish, there is not fishing ground or can constantly be fish enough for so many boates as they have kept ... whereas were there but half so many boates fishd there, they could not make so great destruction one yeare as to prejudice the next yeares fishing.¹⁰⁵

Poor catches might simply have driven the price of fish up but, in fact, the price of cod fell at this time, in both Newfoundland and New England, to the lowest peacetime level recorded since 1639.¹⁰⁶

The ill-timed collapse in demand resulted, no doubt, from economic crisis in Spain, one of the most important markets for Newfoundland fish. Following a currency crisis in New Castile in 1680, prices fell almost 50 percent over the next few years in Andulasia, New Castile, and Old Castile-Leon. With plague and a severe earthquake, the economic crisis triggered a spate of bankruptcies and widespread unemployment, which did not end until a successful currency revaluation, in 1686. In New Castile the price of 25 pounds of dried cod fell from about 2000 maravedis, the average between 1676 and 1680, to a low of 982 in 1682. Prices remained miserably low until 1687.¹⁰⁷ The Newfoundland fishery began to recover in the early 1690s, when Spanish prices recovered somewhat, to the levels that would be typical during the first half of the eighteenth century, ranging between 60 and 75 percent of their seventeenth-century highs. At least fish became more plentiful, after the sharp reduction in fishing effort of the mid-1680s, and in the following decade both the migratory and planter sectors made extraordinary catches, as high as 350 quintals per boat. After 1689, however, both resident and migratory fishers faced the looming dangers of the war with France.¹⁰⁸

Under such circumstances, planters naturally intensified their reliance on local resources. Economic innovations that tended to diversify subsistence brought some stability to a precarious situation. The spread of transhumant winter-housing, which was common in the northern bays by 1700, manifested this trend toward diversification.¹⁰⁹ The inclusion of seal meat into the planters' diet was another innovation of this period, "which they and none but they could eat", Commodore John Graydon sniffed in 1701, adding, dismissively, "such people such stomachs".¹¹⁰ The new salmon, seal, and off-shore banks fisheries of the eighteenth century, the practice of winter-housing, and the introduction of the potato all materially increased the carrying capacity of the island. Following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and another failure in the fishery between 1714 and 1720, this broader economic base permitted population growth on the old English Shore, the beginnings of seri-

ous Irish immigration, and the extension of settlement into Placentia Bay to the south and, despite treaty provisions, into Bonavista and Notre Dame Bays to the north.¹¹¹ By the later eighteenth century, Newfoundland's traditional culture had emerged, in a form still remembered, strongly shaped by these developments in subsistence and migration. The form this traditional culture took in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is, naturally enough, what persists in Newfoundland's historical memory. On the other hand, some elements of a distinctive culture had already emerged by 1680.

ETHNOGENESIS

Without questioning the changes that Newfoundland would undergo in later centuries, we might ask to what extent the small-scale society of the late-seventeenth-century English Shore already constituted a distinguishable culture. The inhabitants of the island were certainly treated as an identifiable interest. When William Downing and Thomas Oxford went to London in 1679, to plead for local government, or at least a church and the fortification of St. John's, the Committee for Trade and Plantations received them as appearing "on behalf of the inhabitants".¹¹² Distinguishable cultural practices were remarked, whether by Welsh chaplains upset by female promiscuity or Royal Navy officers repelled by flipper pie.¹¹³ How seriously can we take the ethnographic implications of such comments? Newfoundlanders were not yet, of course, the people they would become, but, to use the jargon of the social sciences, the inhabitants of the English Shore were already refashioning their ethnicity.

Key aspects of the economic culture of the English Shore, entrenched by 1680, would endure for several centuries. The fishery was and would remain, well into the twentieth century, a vernacular industry, organized in local modules. Merchants had a clientele of planter families to whom they extended credit and from whom they expected fish. Planter clients depended on their merchant patrons for supplies, on the one hand, and on unpropertied fishing servants for labour, on the other. In the later eighteenth century, migratory service in the fishery declined as local recruitment of labour became increasingly feasible — but this shift left the system of patron-client credit in place.¹¹⁴ The Newfoundland fishery continued to be predominantly an inshore industry: cod were present along the coasts of the island in huge quantities until the 1960s. The inshore orientation of the traditional fishery suited the size of vessels easily built locally and induced an annual summer-winter rhythm in the local economy that persisted in rural areas into the late twentieth century. The local cuisine of fish, dried peas, salt meat, game and sea birds, supplemented by cabbage, root vegetables, and preserved berries has subsequently admitted only two significant innovations: the potato and the pot of tea, typical eighteenth-century novelties in the North Atlantic world. The 1970s and 1980s saw

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the development of large, all-season, deep-water trawler fleets; electronic fish-finding equipment; the decline and collapse of fish stocks; and, finally, a moratorium on North America's oldest industry.¹¹⁵ Out-migration or economic diversification into lumbering and the hospitality industry remain the first responses of Newfoundland fisherfolk, in time of crisis.

Some aspects of public life on the early modern English Shore likewise endured for centuries, or at least have parallels in more recent times. In the absence of a legally constituted local government, personal patron-client relationships played a crucial role in seventeenth-century Newfoundland. Virtually the only political process was the petition, an instrument that forges the general will in the absence of representative institutions, and which is another practice that has endured in Newfoundland. Since the social contract was often enforced only by consensus, personal behaviour was not closely regulated, except for matters affecting the staple industry. (No one cared where you kept your cows as long as you were willing to make good for damaged fish.) Distant and intermittent government authority fostered personal liberty, sometimes almost to the point of anarchy.¹¹⁶ It should not be surprising either that Newfoundlanders were among the first of Britain's North American colonists to attempt to constitute their own government (in 1723) or that they were among the last to actually achieve this (in 1832).¹¹⁷

The inhabitants of the seventeenth-century English Shore had, inevitably, a mid-Atlantic point of view: they were Britons with a special relationship to New England, on the one hand, and to New France, on the other. Despite their frequently demonstrated loyalty to British interests, late-seventeenth-century Newfoundlanders already exhibited a sense of being short-changed by Britain, another reaction that is not hard to fathom. Newfoundland was a cosmopolitan place, which also traded with Spain, Portugal and their island possessions. At home, planters rubbed shoulders with the Dutch until the 1660s and with Basques, Normans and Bretons through the century. The Beothuk had withdrawn from trading contacts with the English about 1620, so Newfoundland planters experienced Native people only as a threat to property. At the same time, English over-winterers were themselves in the habit of looting seasonally-abandoned French fishing stations, for boats and other equipment. Although cooperation and trade were not unknown among English and French settlers, the English became increasingly suspicious of their competitors as the French settlements in Placentia Bay grew. By 1680, they had worked themselves into a frenzy of apprehension, in part, no doubt, through consciousness of their own unchristian behaviour.¹¹⁸ Native participation in the rout of the English Shore in the winter of 1696/97 was over perceived and average planters did not likely distinguish very clearly between the Abenaki invaders and local Beothuk, although they may have grasped that many of the French forces arrayed against them came from Quebec. If Newfoundlanders of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were intensely suspicious of "Indians" and Canadians, these cultural reactions are explicable in terms of their seventeenth-century experience.

The transatlantic trade in alcohol remained a central element of Newfoundland's connection with the rest of the world, because wine and spirits played an essential role for this insular society as social and commercial lubricants. Valuables like alcohol and tobacco had two aspects: to the consumer, whether planter or servant, they represented culturally useful goods; to the supplying merchant they were economically efficient returns for fish. These little luxuries became, in some sense, the cultural face of local systems of credit and clientage. In the absence of more regular forms of commerce and government, these goods were more critical and relatively more common on the English Shore than in England itself. In such small societies, where patron-client relationships and credit are more significant than legally constituted governance and a ready cash market, social drinking plays an important role in the socioeconomic life of the community.¹¹⁹ The institution of the tavern becomes a key scene of economic relations, as a free space for negotiation and as a market for the limited range of goods and services, some doubtless embezzled, available outside the normal credit relations of the society.¹²⁰ St. John's, in particular, was known for centuries for its many small snugs — a characteristic that was not historical accident but one facet of a coherent economic culture.

Since culture is a process, there is no single moment when a particular ethnicity comes into existence. On the other hand, cultures have history, and events mark the progress of ethnogenesis. One such event is the introduction of an *ethnonym*, that is a name used by the *ethnos*, for itself. The use of an ethnonym bespeaks a conceptual differentiation from others, who do not share the same history, or law, or customs. Thus, Ari the Learned's *Book of the Icelanders*, a history written about 1120, marks not only the first use of that ethnonym but also suggests that by this time Icelanders could see themselves as sharing a common past that distinguished them from others, particularly Norwegians.¹²¹ In New France, a shift in the connotation of the word *Canadien*, from Aboriginal to French-speaking native of Canada, was first recorded in 1664 and by 1700 was well established in use, primarily by officials from metropolitan France to describe native-born troops. The French historian Chrestien le Clercq used *Canadien* for the people in 1691 and the ethnonym was probably in popular use by this time.¹²² In the same period, under very different circumstances, the Dutch of New York City began to accentuate their own ethnicity.¹²³

The case of Acadia provides, as often, a closer parallel to Newfoundland.¹²⁴ Distinctive social, economic, political, religious, and cultural traditions, including the pervasive ethic of mutual aid, date from the seventeenth century, but Acadians do not seem to have had a concept of themselves as a distinct people until the 1730s. They achieved this understanding, at least in part, through negotiation of the neutrality that came to define them, in this period, among their neighbours. The *dérangement* of 1755 and the eventual return of many of the exiles became a founding myth for the Acadians but the very tenacity with which the refugees held on to their memory of Acadia is clear evidence that they had already developed a strong ethnic identity before they were dispersed by the tragedy of war.¹²⁵ Newfoundland

planter families had suffered the same kind of tragedy in 1697, following the successful French invasion of the English Shore. They watched their homes and fishing craft burn, as they embarked on crowded ships to an uncertain future on distant shores. A surviving petition, signed by “The Constant Inhabitants of Ferryland” speaks movingly of their desire “to againe be possest of our places for rebuilding our houses and stages and rooms for carrying on of our fisherye trade”, but this petition bespeaks identification with a particular outport, on the one hand, and with Britain, on the other, rather than with Newfoundland as an abstraction.¹²⁶ They were “constant” because they were loyal to Britain, in the person of the Protestant monarch William III, and called themselves so to win his support for their return to their “places” and for the military protection needed to do so safely — with little indication that they hoped to reconstitute a sociocultural entity intermediate between Britain and Ferryland.

In fact, lexicographers have not found the ethnonym “Newfoundlander” in use before 1765.¹²⁷ This period, following the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), was one of rapid population growth, when Newfoundland’s boundaries were renegotiated and the island assimilated a large number of outsiders, just as Acadia had in the 1730s.¹²⁸ As in Acadia, the select ingredients of this ethnic stew had been on the boil in a small pot for a long time, which is a good recipe for a distinctive dish, when the time comes to serve it up. In 1697, however, English Newfoundland was still a part society, a congeries of plantations, in the narrow sense, not yet able to imagine themselves as anything more than a plantation, in the wider sense. Newfoundland’s distinctive culture has roots in the seventeenth century, but a consciousness of cultural distinctiveness did not emerge in that period.¹²⁹

Although the inhabitants of seventeenth-century Newfoundland had not yet developed a conception of themselves as a political collectivity or even as an ethnos, the English, paradoxically, had already constructed an identity for Newfoundland and, by implication, Newfoundlanders. By 1700, Newfoundland played a problematic metaphorical role for Britain, or for literate middle-class Britons at any rate, which would bedevil perceptions of the island for a very long time. Certain oppositions were frequently repeated (Table 1). Many of these oppositions had some basis in geographical or sociological reality, of course. Others are the common currency of perceptions of the other, particularly by the richer of the poorer. As the Quebecois put it, “You’re always someone else’s Newfoundie”.¹³⁰ What is of more interest, culturally speaking, is the extent to which these early preconceptions could disguise the economic geography of the eastern coast of Newfoundland and the sociology of the colony of English there, without government ecclesiastical or civil, who lived by catching fish.¹³¹

Table 1. Metaphorical oppositions in seventeenth-century, middle-class, English conceptions of Newfoundland

<i>ENGLAND</i>	<i>NEWFOUNDLAND</i>
warm	cold
land	sea
soil	rock
culture	nature
harvest	hunt
cattle	cod
rich	poor
social	solitary
residence	transience
order	disorder
enclosed	unenclosed
competent	dependent
credit	debt
lawful	lawless
civilized	wild
farm	forest
fertile	infertile
family	young males
marriage	sex
church	tavern
christian	godless
good	wicked

Sources: See particularly the naval commodores “Replies to Heads of Inquiry” and John Thomas in Peter Pope, “*A True and Faithful Account: Newfoundland in 1680*”, *Newfoundland Studies* 12 (1) (1996), 32-49.

An example will suggest the power of metaphor to muffle an otherwise competent observer. Sir William Poole was the author of the planter census of 1677, the most detailed of the century. He enumerated gardens and pastures, swine, cattle, and sheep, besides the usual infrastructure of the staple industry. Yet in his “Answers to the Severall Heads of Inquiry”, he told the Committee for Trade and Plantations “The planters and all others conclude the country not able to support itselfe, affording nothing but wood, except what is hooked out of the sea”.¹³² Just as farming was over-perceived in late-medieval Iceland, fishing was over-perceived in early modern Newfoundland. The invisibility of fishing in Iceland is the inverse of the invisibility of farming in Newfoundland. In Iceland, only outsiders valued fish-

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ing, which the inhabitants themselves disregarded; in Newfoundland, outsiders discounted the under-perceived category, farming.¹³³ This difference marks, perhaps, the extent to which late-medieval Icelanders had developed their own ability to deceive themselves, as good an indication of having developed their own culture as any, whereas seventeenth-century Newfoundlanders still relied on others.

The characteristics ascribed to Newfoundland in the later seventeenth century, in opposition to English values and virtues, constituted a kind of cultural impediment to the development of settlement. Medieval Norwegians had ascribed to Iceland a similar cluster of unattractive attributes, with a similar implication: there was something fishy about the place; it was so cold, unattractive, infertile and wicked, that it could not be seriously considered as a possible place to emigrate. Icelanders themselves projected similarly negative preconceptions on their own fishery. Icelandic law permitted men to make the long trek to seasonal fishing camps in the southeast every spring but required them to return in the summer to man the social world of the farm households scattered along the valleys of the north and west. It was culturally acceptable for young men to move into the natural world to fish, but it was not acceptable for them to reside there, outside of the social world of the farm.¹³⁴ These prejudices present an obvious parallel with English policy in the second half of the seventeenth century, to the extent that it was designed to corner migratory fishing servants into returning to the West Country from the English Shore. The underlying, profoundly negative, cultural attitude to Newfoundland was probably far more effective in retarding the development of “settled government” than the occasional cabal of West Country merchants or the intermittent and erratically-enforced legal regulations of the period. The English Shore may not yet have developed a consciousness of itself but it already played a cultural role for England, tolerated as a nursery of seamen but scorned as an exemplar of the wretched life of those beyond a properly ordered agricultural society.

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Notes

¹Great Britain, Public Record Office [PRO], London, Colonial Office [CO], 1/41 (62), 147-148.

²For the simplistic view, see Kenneth Norrie and Douglas Owrn, *A History of the Canadian Economy* (Toronto, 1991), 58.

³Samuel Wood, Examination, 22 August 1680; John Wallis, Examination, 24 August 1680; John Ducarrett, Power of Attorney to George Perriman, 31 July 1680; George Perriman, "Paper concerning Damage", 31 August 1680; Christopher Pollard and John Rolson, Bond, 30 September 1680; Aaron Browning and Robert Fishley, "Declaraton", 27 September 1680; Robert Robinson et al., Sentence of Francis Knapman, John Wallis, William Couch and Samuel Wood, 30 September 1680; all in CO 1/45 (68i-iv), 252-256. On shallows, see C. Grant Head, *Eighteenth Century Newfoundland: A Geographer's Perspective* (Toronto, 1976), 80.

⁴Records of civil or criminal complaints tried in Newfoundland are relatively rare before 1750, when courts and court records were reformed; see Jerry Bannister, *The Rule of the Admirals: Law, Custom, and Naval Government in Newfoundland, 1699-1832* (Toronto, 2003), 104-133.

⁵This is an early use of the term.

⁶Wallis and Wood, Examinations (1680).

⁷Jerry Bannister, "The Fishing Admirals in Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland", *Newfoundland Studies* 17 (2), 166-219.

⁸Ducarret, Power of attorney; Perriman, "Damage"; Pollard and Rolson, Bond; Browning and Fishley, "Declaration"; Robinson et al., Sentence (all 1680).

⁹John Downing, "A Breif Narrative concerning Newfoundland", 24 November 1676, British Library, Egerton ms 2395, 560-563. The English appear to have been stealing French boats for almost a century; see "The Voyage of Charles Leigh" (1597), in David B. Quinn, ed., *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612*, vol. 4, *Newfoundland from Fishery to Colony. Northwest Passage Searches* (New York, 1979), 68-75.

¹⁰Furs estimated from Arthur J. Ray and David B. Freeman, 'Give Us Good Measure': *an Economic Analysis of Relations between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763* (Toronto, 1978), 64, Table 1; 88, Figure 3; and 149, Figure 25. On ironwork see John Downing, "Newfoundland An Account Concerning the following Particulars", 14 December 1676, British Library, Egerton ms 2395, 564.

¹¹Cf. Peter E. Pope, *Fish Into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 268-273.

¹²Merchants of West Country Ports, "Reply ... to the allegations of Capt. Robert Robinson", ca. 1668, CO 1/22 (71); Council for Trade and Plantations (CTP), Report, 15 April 1675, CO 1/65 (32i), 114-119v; Josiah Child, *A New Discourse of Trade* (London, 1693), 201; Gillian T. Cell, "The Cupids Cove Settlement: A Case Study of the Problems of Early Colonisation", in G.M. Story, ed., *Early European Settlement and Exploitation in Atlantic Canada* (St. John's, 1982), 97-114 and *English Enterprise in Newfoundland, 1577-1660* (Toronto, 1969), 79, 96.

¹³Cf. Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978), 110, 155; John McCusker and Russell Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985), 23-34.

¹⁴Anon., "Some Modest observations and queries upon ... Newfoundland", 25 March 1675, CO 1/34 (32), 69-72; Wilfred Templeman, *Marine Resources of Newfoundland* (Ottawa, 1966), 40; cf. Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic 1675-1740, an Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York, 1986), 83.

¹⁵William Poole, "Answers to the Severall Heads of Inquiry", 10 September 1677, CO 1/41 (61i), 149-152v, with some repunctuation.

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¹⁶Head, *Eighteenth Century Newfoundland*, 176. On salmon exports, see [James] Hubland [= Houblon] and [John] Gold [Gould], "Paper in Answer Mr. Dodington's ...", 28 November 1673, CO 388/1, 80-82.

¹⁷Richard Whitbourne, *A Discourse and Discovery of New-Found-Land* [1622], rep. in Gillian T. Cell, ed., *Newfoundland Discovered: English Attempts at Colonisation, 1610-1630* (London, 1982), 101-206, see 120.

¹⁸J.K. Crellin, "'The aire in Newfoundland is wholesome good': The Medical Landscape of Newfoundland in the Seventeenth Century", *Avalon Chronicles* 4 (1999), 1-24.

¹⁹D. Dodds, "Terrestrial Mammals", in G. Robin South, ed., *Biogeography and Ecology of the Island of Newfoundland* (The Hague, 1983), 509-549; John Guy to John Slaney, 16 May 1611, in D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records* (1895, rep. Belleville, ON, 1972), 125-127; Henry Crout to Percival Willoughby, 13 April 1613, in Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered*, 79-89; Poole, "Answers to Inquiry" (1677), 149v; [John] Graydon, "Answers to the Heads of Enquiry", 20 September 1701, CO 194/2 (20), 176-178v; James Yonge, *The Journal of James Yonge [1647-1721]*, ed., F.N.L. Poynter (London, 1963), 60.

²⁰P.B. Munsche, "The Gamekeeper and English Rural Society, 1660-1830", *Journal of British Studies* 20 (2) (1981), 82-105; Roger B. Manning, *Hunters and Poachers: A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England, 1485-1640* (Oxford, 1993), 232-236.

²¹For a fine discussion of local subsistence, see G. William Gilbert, "Russell's Point (CiAj-1): A Little Passage/Beothuk Site at the Bottom of Trinity Bay", M.A. thesis, Memorial (2001), 20-36. On seabirds see William Threlfall, "Seabirds", in South, ed., *Biogeography of Newfoundland*, 467-496. For archaeological analysis of faunal remains, see Lisa Hodgetts, "Seventeenth-Century English Colonial Diet at Ferryland, Newfoundland", postdoctoral report on file, Archaeology Unit, Memorial University, 2003.

²²Bristol Port Books, 1598, E 190/1132/9, in J. Vanes, ed., *Documents Illustrating the Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Sixteenth Century*, Bristol Record Society 31 (1979), 161. The *Grace* also encountered Beothuks in a 1594 expedition; see Ingeborg Marshall, *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk* (Montreal and Kingston, 1996), 21-24.

²³John Poyntz, [Advice on settlement] "given to Sir Henry Salusbury ...", 1626, in Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered*, 246-249; David Kirke, "A Narrative made by the Latt Governor", ca. 1652, British Library, Egerton ms 2395, 259-261. Calvert's men took furs; see George Calvert [to Francis Cottington], 18 August 1629, in Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered*, 292-294.

²⁴Ralph T. Pastore, "The Collapse of the Beothuk World", *Acadiensis* 19 (1) (1989), 52-71, 57; Peter E. Pope, "Scavengers and Caretakers: Beothuk/European Settlement Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Newfoundland", *Newfoundland Studies* 9 (2) (1993), 279-293; quote from Wallis, Examination, 24 August 1680.

²⁵Wheler, "Answers to Inquiries" (1684); cf. Anon., "Modest observations" (1675); Yonge, *Journal* (1663), 60; Mathews, "Concerning the French" (1671).

²⁶Dartmouth Customer, Port Books 1666, PRO Exchequer, E 190 954/10, cf. Todd Gray, "Fishing and the Commercial World of Early Stuart Dartmouth", in Todd Gray, Margery Rowe, and Audrey Erskine, eds., *Tudor and Stuart Devon, the Common Estate and Government: Essays Presented to Joyce Youings* (Exeter, 1992), 173-199, see 182.

²⁷On the value of the trade ca. 1700, see Marshall, *Beothuk*, 80-83, Table 5.1. Glanville James Davies, "England and Newfoundland: Policy and Trade, 1660-1783", Ph.D.

diss. (University of Southampton, 1980), 245-247, provides eighteenth-century evidence for significant imports of skins from Newfoundland to the West Country — but this could be misleading if sealskins, for example, are not distinguished from other “skins”.

²⁸James Story, “An Account of ... Shipps, Planters, etc”, 1 September 1681, CO 1/47 (52i), 113-121v, 116v.

²⁹Downing, “Concerning Particulars” (1676); John Scantlebury, “John Rashleigh of Fowey and the Newfoundland Cod Fishery 1608-20”, *Royal Institution of Cornwall Journal*, new series, 8 (1978-81), 61-71; Benjamin Marston, Instructions to Robert Holmes, 20 April 1708, Essex Co. Court of Common Pleas, Essex Institute, 3530.F.14. Merchants did not supply planters with boats, *pace* Keith Matthews, *Lectures on the History of Newfoundland* (St. John’s, 1988), 21, nor were they even regularly imported for English migratory fishermen, *pace* Norrie and Owram, *History of the Canadian Economy*, 58.

³⁰Cell, *English Enterprise*, 64, and Anne Love, Amy Taylor and John Slaughter, “Answers”, 30 August 1652, Maryland HS, Calvert Mss 174/200, in Peter E. Pope, “Baltimore Vs. Kirke: Newfoundland Evidence in an Interregnum Lawsuit”, *Avalon Chronicles* 3 (1998): 63-98.

³¹Poole to Council for Trades and Plantations [CTP], 10 September 1677.

³²Nehemiah Troute, Deposition, 1 February 1678, CO 1/42 (22), 58-59v.

³³Transport systems for staple collection are, historically, the prime example of backward linkage; see Melville H. Watkins, “A Staple Theory of Economic Growth”, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 29 (2) (1963), 141-58.

³⁴Some biased estimates in the 1640s put the useful life of a Newfoundland fishing boat at three years, but rental rates in the 1680s suggest greater durability; see William Hill, Examination in Baltimore vs Kirke, 15 February 1653, PRO High Court of Admiralty HCA 13/67, n.p.; Francis Wheler, “The Charge for fitting out two Boats ... according to the Custome of the Inhabitants”, 27 October 1684, CO 1/55 (56iii), 251v-252. About 1800, Lloyds classified Newfoundland ships of spruce and juniper as first-class risks for seven years and those of fir and black birch for four years; see “Rules Adopted by the Committee of the New Register-Book of Shipping”, in [Lloyds], *New Register Book of Shipping for the Year 1800* (London, n.d.), n.p.

³⁵Total recorded value of planter fish production in 1680 was £42087; see Anon., “Abstract of the Newfoundland Fishery ...”, 1680, CO 1/46 (78), 152-153. The boat-building industry was probably worth something between £1500 and £2000.

³⁶Poole, “Answers to Inquiry” (1677) emphasizes the role of woods industries, including exports; on the eighteenth century, see Davies, “Policy and Trade”, 244-246.

³⁷Wheler, “Answers to Inquiries” (1684). For visitors’ views, see W. Gordon Handcock, *Soe Longe as There Comes Noe Women: Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland* (St. John’s, 1989), 39.

³⁸Head, *Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland*, 45.

³⁹Cell, *English Enterprise*, 79 and 96, and John Mannion, “Victualling a Fishery: Newfoundland Diet and the Origins of the Irish Provisions Trade, 1675-1700”, *International Journal of Maritime History* 12 (1) (2000), 1-57, see 6. Even the best discussion of early Newfoundland agriculture dates its beginnings a half century too late; see Robert MacKinnon, “Farming the Rock: the Evolution of Commercial Agriculture around St. John’s, Newfoundland, to 1945”, *Acadiensis* 20 (2) (1991), 32-61.

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⁴⁰Gerald M. Sider, "The Ties that Bind: Culture and Agriculture, Property and Propriety in the Newfoundland Village Fishery", *Social History* 5 (1980), 1-39, and *Culture and Class in Anthropology and History: A Newfoundland Illustration* (Cambridge, 1986), 112-115.

⁴¹Robert Robinson, "Inquiries Made", 11 October 1680, CO 1/46 (8x), 33-34v.

⁴²Charles Talbot, "Answers to the Enquiries", 15 September 1679, CO 1/43 (121), 214-217, and cf. Colonel Gibson to CTP, 28 June 1697, CO 194/1 (81), 159-160.

⁴³Pope, *Fish Into Wine*, 175-185; Pope, "Modernization on Hold: The Traditional Character of the Newfoundland Cod Fishery in the Seventeenth Century", *International Journal of Maritime History* 15 (2) (2003), 233-264.

⁴⁴John Downing, Petition to Charles I, 7 November 1676, CO 1/38 (33), 69.

⁴⁵There were 28 gardens and 27 households in St. John's, in 1677; see Poole, "Particular Accompt".

⁴⁶Edward Wynne to George Calvert, 28 July and 17 August 1622, in Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered*, 195-198, 200-204; Poole, "Answers to Inquiry" (1677), 150.

⁴⁷Poyntz, Advice on settlement (1626).

⁴⁸On anti-scorbutics, see William Colston to John Slany, 29 July 1612, in Samuel Purchas, ed., *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrims* (1625, Glasgow, 1906) vol. 19, 417-424; Henry Crout to Percival Willoughby, 13 April 1613; William Vaughan, *The Newlanders Cure* (London, 1630), 51, 67-74.

⁴⁹Thomas Cruse, Deposition at Totnes, 27 November 1667, West Devon Record Office, Plymouth, W360/74.

⁵⁰Poole, "Particular Accompt" (1677).

⁵¹"A great chain of credit" is borrowed from Jacob M. Price, "Conclusion", in Rosemary E. Ommer, ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective* (Fredericton, NB, 1990), 360-373, see 360.

⁵²Alison Grant, *North Devon Pottery: The Seventeenth Century* (Exeter, 1983), 91-96; Peter E. Pope, "Ceramics from Seventeenth Century Ferryland, Newfoundland (CgAf-2, locus B)", M.A. thesis, Memorial (1986), 188, Table 11, in *Studies in Newfoundland Archaeology*, vol. 2, *17th- and 18th-century Material Culture*, CD (St. John's, 2001).

⁵³John Collins, *Salt and Fishery* (London, 1682), 137; C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain: from the Stone Age to Recent Times* (Harmondsworth, 1984), 150; cf. Crout to Willoughby, 13 April 1613.

⁵⁴Alan Everitt, "Farm Labourers", in Thirsk, ed., *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 4, *1500-1640*, 396-465, see 415, Table 7; Thomas Bushrode, Debit account re the Susan, 18 March 1648, in *A Volume Relating to the Early History of Boston, Containing the Aspinwall Notarial Records from 1644 to 1651*, Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston no. 32 (Boston, 1903), 205.

⁵⁵Poole to CTP, 10 September 1677, repunctuated. Cf. Keith D. Mercer, "Some Considerations Touching ... By-boats: James Yonge on the Fisheries Controversy of the 1660s", this volume.

⁵⁶James Houblon to Robert Southwell, 20 March 1675, CO 1/65 (23), 97; Troute, Deposition (1678); John Carter et al., "Severall Reasons offered for not Removing the Planters", ca. 1680, CO 1/46 (77), 151.

⁵⁷Robert Gybbes et al., "Pettitions of Plimouth against Sir David Kirke", *Winthrop Papers Volume 1*, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections 3 (5) (Boston, 1871),

449-450; Gentry of Exeter, Dartmouth, Totnes, etc., Petition, 25 March 1675, CO 1/65 (25), 100; Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: a Social History 1200-1830* (London, 1983), esp. 128-139; G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (2nd ed., Toronto, 2002) (*DNE*), "dieter".

⁵⁸Gray, "Early Stuart Dartmouth", in Gray, Rowe, and Erskine, eds., *Tudor and Stuart Devon*, 173-199, 176.

⁵⁹Cf. Jean-François Brière, *La pêche française en Amérique du nord au XVIIIe siècle* (Quebec, 1990), 59, 261-262.

⁶⁰Yonge, *Journal*, 60. On Yonge, see Mercer, "Some Considerations Touching ... By-boats".

⁶¹John Downing, "The maner of Catching and makeing fish in Newfoundland", British Library, Egerton ms 2395, f. 565-566.

⁶²Peter E. Pope, "Fish Into Wine: The Historical Anthropology of the Demand for Alcohol in 17th-Century Newfoundland", in Jack S. Blocker and Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, eds., *The Changing Face of Drink: Substance, Imagery, and Behaviour* (Ottawa, 1997), 43-64.

⁶³Charles E. Clark, *The Eastern Frontier, the Settlement of Northern New England, 1610-1763* (1970, rep. Hanover, NH, 1983); Evan Jones, "England's Icelandic Fisheries in the Early Modern Period", in David J. Starkey, Chris Reid, and Neil Ashcroft, eds., *England's Sea Fisheries: the Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300* (London, 2000), 36-45; John C. Appleby, "A Nursery of Pirates: The English Pirate Community in Ireland in the Early Seventeenth Century", *International Journal of Maritime History* 2 (1) (1990), 1-27; Pal Christensen and Alf Ragnar Nielssen, "Norwegian Fisheries 1100-1970, Main Developments", in Poul Holm, David J. Starkey, and Jón Th. Thór, eds., *The North Atlantic Fisheries, 1100-1976: National Perspectives on a Common Resource* (Reykjavik, 1996), 145-167, 152-153; J.W. Veluwenkamp, "The Murman Coast and the Northern Dvina Delta as English and Dutch Commercial Destinations in the 16th and 17th Centuries", *Arctic* 48 (3) (1995), 257-266.

⁶⁴Pope, "Modernization on Hold", 245-249; *Fish into Wine*, 30-32.

⁶⁵Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978), 111, 120, 169; A.R. Michell, "The European Fisheries in Early Modern History", in E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson, eds., *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. 5, *Economic Organization of Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1977), 132-184, see 140, 158.

⁶⁶Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered*, 2; David J. Starkey, "Devonians and the Newfoundland Trade", in Michael Duffy et al., eds., *New Maritime History of Devon*, vol. 1, *From Early Times to the Late Eighteenth Century* (London, 1992), 163-171, see 168; CTP, Minutes, 2 December 1675, CO 391/1, 25v-26; cf. B.A. Holderness, "Credit in a Rural Community, 1660-1800: Some Neglected Aspects of Probate Inventories", *Midland History* 3 (1975), 97-109, see 99. On shared provisioning see Robert Hichins et al. vs. John Parre and George Tremblett, Vice-Admiralty Court of Devon, 12 April 1677, in "Transcripts and Transactions" III, Devon Record Office, Exeter, 24.

⁶⁷Robert Hitchcock, *A Pollitique Platt for the Honour of the Prince* [1580], in R.H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds., *Tudor Economic Documents* (1924, rep. London, 1953), 239-256, see 253. Recall that bottomry had an insurance component, so Hitchcock's 25 per cent return does not reflect profit rates.

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⁶⁸“A great chain of credit” is borrowed from Jacob M. Price, “Conclusion”, in Rosemary E. Ommer, ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective* (Fredericton, NB, 1990), 360-373, see 360.

⁶⁹George Shute, Bond to R. Land, 7 August 1641, North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple, 4116.

⁷⁰“Atomistic”: Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy* (1954, rep. Toronto, 1978), 91.

⁷¹Peter Pope, “Adventures in the Sack Trade: London Merchants in the Canada and Newfoundland Trades, 1627-1648”, *Northern Mariner* 6 (1) (1996), 1-19.

⁷²Smuel N. Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, “Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), 42-77; Pope, *Fish into Wine*, 273-285.

⁷³Pope, “Modernization on Hold”, 264.

⁷⁴Eric Hobsbawm, “The Crisis of the 17th Century II”, *Past and Present* 6 (1954), 44-65.

⁷⁵Robert Gybbes et al., “Petitions of Plymouth against Sir David Kirke”, ca. 1650, in Samuel Eliot Morison et al., eds., *Winthrop Papers* (Boston, 1929-) vol. 3, 499-501.

⁷⁶Laurier Turgeon, “Le temps des pêches lointaines: permanences et transformations (vers 1500 — vers 1850)”, in Michel Mollat, ed., *Histoire de pêches maritimes en France* (Toulouse, 1987), 134-181; R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews, eds., *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 1, *From the Beginning to 1800* (Toronto, 1987), 48, uses the description “un-mechanized seasonal factories”.

⁷⁷Hans Medick, “The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family During the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism”, *Social History* 3 (1976), 291-315; Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson, and Michael Sonenscher, eds., *Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Factory* (Cambridge, 1983), 1-32; and Maxine Berg, “Markets, Trade and European Manufacture”, in Berg, ed., *Markets and Manufacture in Early Industrial Europe* (London, 1991), 3-25.

⁷⁸J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, eds., *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1989), “truck”; *DNE*, “truck-system”.

⁷⁹Jacob M. Price, “Conclusion”, in Ommer, *Merchant Credit*, 360-373 and cf. the other papers; B.A. Holderness, “Credit in English Rural Society before the Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to the Period 1650-1720”, *Agricultural History Review* 24 (1976), 97-109; Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation, the Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, 1998), 95-119; Louise Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Montreal* (1974, trans. Montreal and Kingston, 1992), 97-107.

⁸⁰Steven Antler, “The Capitalist Underdevelopment of Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland”, in Robert J. Brym and R. James Sacouman, eds., *Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Atlantic Canada* (Toronto, 1979), 179-202; Handcock, *Origins*, 232-235; Sider, *Culture and Class*, 46-57; James K. Hiller, “The Newfoundland Credit System: an Interpretation”, in Ommer, *Merchant Credit*, 86-102; Sean T. Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855* (Toronto, 1995), 100-120.

⁸¹William Miles, Petition to CTP, 10 May 1681; John Vallet, "Accompt of debts ...", 10 May 1681; CTP, "Report touching an Account of William Miles ...", 17 May 1681; CO 1/46 (154i-iii), 359, 360, 361v-362v.

⁸²Pastour de Costabelle, 20 October 1699, France, Archives des Colonies, C¹¹C, vol. 2, 239-246v: "Les Anglois dans la commerce de la troque ont une precaution qui ne scauroit estre ruineuse pour eux, ny pour ceux qui les secourent dans leurs necessités, qui est celle que chaque habitant epouse son marchand. Cest terme dont ils se servent qui est assez significantif, c'est a dire qu'ils ne font aucune sorte de commerce qu'avec eux. Ils s'engagent de pars et d'autre, l'un a donner toute sa pesche, et l'autre a fournir toutes les denrées et agres necessaire a son entretien. Le marchand dans un accompt semblable ne risque jamais de perdre la pesche estant ordinairement asses abondante pour survenir aux consommations de ce travail, lors qu'il est fait avec un peu d'economie, et lors qu'il excede au profit de le habitant. Comme de raison, il luy paye le surplus de ses poissons au prix courant ..." The translation here is mine.

⁸³James Story, "An Account of ... Shipp's Planters etc from Trepasse to Bonavista ...", 1 September 1681, CO 1/47 (52i), 113-121v.

⁸⁴Francis Wheler, "Answers to the heads of Inquirys ...", 27 October 1684, CO 1/55 (56), 239-246v, 241v.

⁸⁵George Larkin to CTP, 20 August 1701, CO 194/2 (44), 181-182v.

⁸⁶Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen, Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1830* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 153-158.

⁸⁷Rosemary E. Ommer, "What's Wrong with Canadian Fish?" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (3) (1986), 122-142; Sean Cadigan, "The Moral Economy of the Commons: Ecology and Equity in the Newfoundland Cod Fishery, 1815-1855", *Labour/Le Travail* 43 (1999), 9-41.

⁸⁸Robert E. Baldwin, "Patterns of Development in Newly Settled Regions", *Manchester School of Economics and Social Studies* 29 (1956), 161-79.

⁸⁹On "super-exploitation", see Andre Gunder Frank, *World Accumulation, 1492-1789* (New York, 1978), 240.

⁹⁰Pope, *Fish into Wine*, Table 11, 184.

⁹¹John Mannion, "Irish Migration and Settlement in Newfoundland: The Formative Phase, 1697-1732", *Newfoundland Studies* 17 (2) (2001), 257-293; Handcock, *Origins*, 30, 88.

⁹²Cf. J.B.C. Jackson et al., "Historical Overfishing and the Recent Collapse of Coastal Ecosystems", *Science* 293 (5530) (2001), 629-638; Johanna J. (Sheila) Heymans and Tony J. Pitcher, "A Picasso-Esque View of the Marine Ecosystem of Newfoundland and Southern Labrador: Models for the Time Periods 1450 and 1900", University of British Columbia, *Fisheries Centre Research Reports* 10 (5) (2002), 44-74.

⁹³Pope, *Fish into Wine*, Table 37, 425.

⁹⁴Pope, *Fish into Wine*, 237-241.

⁹⁵Peter E. Pope, "The Newfoundland Planter Fishery in the Seventeenth Century", *Studia Atlantica* (in press); Head, *Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland*, 66-68.

⁹⁶Pope, "Historical Anthropology of Alcohol".

⁹⁷On housing, see Gregory Clark, "Shelter from the Storm: Housing and the Industrial Revolution, 1550-1909", *Journal of Economic History* 62 (2002), 489-511.

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⁹⁸Staple theorists concerned with a single periphery, who have greatly influenced Canadian economic history, stressed expense on luxury imports as an obstacle to economic development through linkages in production: see Baldwin, "Patterns of Development", 172, and Melville H. Watkins, "A Staple Theory of Economic Growth", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 29 (1963), 141-158, esp. 146. For a more positive view of luxuries see, for example, Ralph Davis, "England and the Mediterranean, 1570-1670", in F.J. Fisher, ed., *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England, in Honour of R.H. Tawney* (Cambridge, 1961), 117-137; and Nuala Zahedieh, "London and the Colonial Consumer in the Late Seventeenth Century", *Economic History Review* 47 (1994), 239-261. Although staple theory is not completely forgotten, it was displaced by world systems theory, which (significantly) has revived the staple theorists' interest in linkages, now conceived of as "commodity chains". See Sean Cadigan, "The Staple Model Reconsidered: The Case of Agricultural Policy in Northeast Newfoundland, 1785-1855", *Acadiensis* 21 (2) (1992), 48-71; and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Commodity Chains in the World-Economy, 1590-1790", *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center) 23 (1) (2000), 1-13.

⁹⁹Kirsten Hastrup, *Nature and Policy in Iceland, 1400-1800: An Anthropological Analysis of History and Mentality* (Oxford, 1990), 45-79, 280-281.

¹⁰⁰E.g., Poole, "Answers to Inquiry" (1677).

¹⁰¹James A. Tuck and Ralph T. Pastore, "A Nice Place to Visit but ... Prehistoric Extinctions on the Island of Newfoundland", *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 9 (1) (1985), 69-80.

¹⁰²John Norris to CTP, 17 March 1698, CO 194/1 (96), 196-197.

¹⁰³Keith Matthews, "A History of the West of England-Newfoundland Fisheries", D.Phil. diss. (Oxford, 1968), 160, suggests that chronic indebtedness trapped planters in Newfoundland from about 1660 to 1690; cf. Hancock, *Origins*, 35. There are few reasons, however, to date this credit crisis to the 1660s or 1670s. Planters were certainly enmeshed in the kind of debt relations that were pervasive in the period and apparent, for example, in the 1671 list of the Newfoundland creditors of a Salem merchant: Veren Hilliard, Henry Skerry, and John Price, Inventory of John Croad, June 1671, in George F. Dow and Mary G. Thresher, eds., *Records and Files of the Quarterly Court of Essex County, Massachusetts*, Essex Institute (Salem, MA, 1911-75), vol. 4, 401-403. Only a few of those debts amount to the net worth of even a small planter, however. Nor do observers suggest that debt was out of control before 1680. For example, Berry, an acute and sympathetic observer, makes no reference to chronic debt in 1675: John Berry to John Williamson, 24 July and 12 September 1675, CO 1/34 (118), 240-241 and CO 1/35 (16), 109-110; "Observations ... in relation to the trade and inhabitants of Newfoundland", 18 July 1676, CO 1/35 (81), 325-326.

¹⁰⁴Pope, *Fish into Wine*, Table 37, 425.

¹⁰⁵Talbot to Charles II, 14 February 1683, CO 1/51 (29), 67-68.

¹⁰⁶Pope, *Fish into Wine*, Table 2, 38.

¹⁰⁷Pope, "Newfoundland Planter Fishery".

¹⁰⁸Peter Pope, "Early Estimates: Assessment of Catches in the Newfoundland Cod Fishery, 1660-1690", in Daniel Vickers, ed., *Maritime Resources and Human Societies in the North Atlantic Since 1500*, ISER Conference Papers no. 5 (St. John's, 1997), 9-40, suggests that British fishing effort in the Newfoundland fishery did not vary wildly in the way suggested by some recent historical summaries. On the crisis in Castile, see Earl J. Hamilton, *War and Prices in Spain, 1651-1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1947), 120, Chart II, 126-127, and

Appendix I, Table A, 236-237, 242-245. For a more general explanation of the crisis see Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen*, 155-167.

¹⁰⁹Philip E.L. Smith, "In Winter Quarters", *Newfoundland Studies* 3 (1) (1987), 1-36.

¹¹⁰Graydon, "Answers to the Heads of Enquiry", 20 September 1701, CO 194/2 (46xii), 175-178v. Archaeologists Barry Gaulton and James A. Tuck tell me they recovered seal bones from a late seventeenth-century kitchen context at Ferryland in their 2001 excavations. Cf. Hodgetts, "Seventeenth-Century Diet at Ferryland".

¹¹¹Cf. Hancock, *Origins*, 91-120, and Head, *Newfoundland*, 83-94.

¹¹²W. Noël Sainsbury and J.W. Fortescue, eds., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies* (London, 1880-1899) reports the Downing-Oxford lobby "on behalf of the Newfoundland people", a promising turn of phrase from the anthropological point of view, but the CTP, Journal, 5 April 1679, CO 391/2, 159, v, actually reads "inhabitants", as quoted.

¹¹³On promiscuity see John Thomas, "A briefe relation how the peopl in Newfoundland, stand as to religion", 1680, Codrington Library, All Souls College, Oxford, Wynne Collection, ms 239, f.231-232, in Peter Pope, "*A True and Faithful Account: Newfoundland in 1680*", *Newfoundland Studies* 12 (1) (1996), 32-49.

¹¹⁴Cadigan, *Hope and Deception*, 37-50, 100-120.

¹¹⁵Jeffrey A. Hutchings and Ransom A. Myers, "The Biological Collapse of Atlantic Cod Off Newfoundland and Labrador: An Exploration of Historical Changes in Exploitation, Harvesting Technology, and Management", in Ragnor Arnason and Lawrence Felt, eds., *The North Atlantic Fisheries: Successes, Failures, and Challenges* (Charlottetown, PEI, 1995), 37-83.

¹¹⁶Sider, *Culture and Class*, 26-29.

¹¹⁷In 1723, a committee of St. John's merchant planters, disturbed by the lack of a local authority, invoked John Locke's second treatise and set up their own court to protect their property from their more anarchic neighbors; see Jeff A. Webb, "Leaving the State of Nature: A Locke-Inspired Political Community in St. John's, Newfoundland, 1723", *Acadiensis* 21 (1) (1991), 156-165. Britain did not grant representative government until 1832, following a decade of local lobbying for reform; see Keith Matthews, "The Class of '32: St. John's Reformers on the Eve of Representative Government", in P.A. Buckner and David Frank, eds., *Atlantic Canada before Confederation* (Fredericton, NB, 1985), 212-226. On the intervening "naval state", see Jerry Bannister, "The Naval State in Newfoundland, 1749-1791", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, new series 11 (2000), 17-50; and, for an extended analysis, Bannister, *The Rule of the Admirals*.

¹¹⁸John Thomas to Sir Richard [?], 15 September 1680, Codrington Library, All Souls College, Oxford, Wynne Collection, ms 239, f.229-230v, in Pope, "True and Faithful Account", 32-49, see 42.

¹¹⁹Pope, "Historical Anthropology of Alcohol".

¹²⁰Lars Magnusson, "Markets in Context: Artisans, Putting Out and Social Drinking in Eskilstuna, Sweden 1800-50", in Berg, ed., *Markets and Manufacture*, 292-320.

¹²¹Kirsten Hastrup, "Establishing an Ethnicity: the Emergence of the 'Icelanders' in the Early Middle Ages", in *Island of Anthropology: Studies in Past and Present Iceland* (Odense, 1990), 69-82, see 76-77.

¹²²Gervais Carpin, *Histoire d'un Mot, l'Ethnonyme Canadien de 1535 à 1691* (Sillery, 1995), 144-157.

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¹²³Joyce D. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in New York City, 1664-1730* (Princeton, 1992), 217-221.

¹²⁴Peter Pope, "Comparisons: Atlantic Canada", in Daniel Vickers, ed., *A Companion to Colonial America* (Malden, MA, 2003), 489-507.

¹²⁵Naomi Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784* (Montreal and Kingston, 1992), 33-61.

¹²⁶John Clappe et al., Petition to William III, 1697, CO 194/1 (6), 14.

¹²⁷*DNE*, "newfoundlander".

¹²⁸Mannion, "Irish Migration, 1697-1732".

¹²⁹Sider, *Culture and Class*, 32, argues that Newfoundland culture could not emerge until after the collapse of the servant fishery permitted the growth of "the village and family-based fishery". Since I reject Sider's assumption that the early servant fishery was not family-based, his analysis of limits on the emergence of a local culture does not make much sense to me, though the chronology roughly coincides.

¹³⁰Yvon Dulude and Jean-Claude Trait, *Dictionnaire des injures québécoises* (Montreal, 1996), 295, quotes Sylvain Lelièvre: "On est toujours le newfie d'un autre". In his song, "Le chanteur indigène", Lelièvre puts the idea more elegantly: "On est toujours un peu l'Iroquois de quelqu'un". ("We're always sort of someone's Indian" — translation mine, as in the text.)

¹³¹The characterization of Newfoundland from Anon., "An Account of his Majesties Plantations in America", ca. 1680, British Library, Add ms 15898, 129-131v.

¹³²Compare Poole, "A particular Accompt of all ye Inhabitants and Planters", 10 September 1677, CO 1/41 (62iv), 157-166 and "Answers" (1677).

¹³³Hastrup, *Island of Anthropology*, 218-232.

¹³⁴Kirsten Hastrup, *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland: An Anthropological Analysis of Structure and Change* (Oxford, 1985), 160-161; *Nature and Policy*, 69-79; *Island of Anthropology*, 229-230.