

NEWFOUNDLAND AND THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

establishment at Placentia before the French occupation. Jersey Side in Placentia Bay is the only reminder left of the fact that a fishing firm from the Channel Islands once occupied this spot. N/A
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History, as it deals with the discovery of America, gives us records of certain expeditions which sailed from the Old World to search for and discover lands in the west. Each expedition was fitted out at the expense of one of the crowned heads of the maritime states of Europe, and their doings were fairly chronicled, but no account was taken of the venturesome fisherman or trader who sailed away in pursuit of the wealth of the seas and the accumulation of riches by trading with the barbarians or savages of little known lands. Yet there is often a record left in the names of places which tells us of the people who first discovered the harbors, capes, rivers, etc., of a new country, although it may not be chronicled in history. As Canon Taylor says,¹⁰ "the name of a district or of a town may speak to us of events which written history has failed to commemorate." That many of the names of places in Newfoundland were given by the people of the Channel Islands proves that it was very early known to, and occupied by, these adventurous fishermen. L4
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It has in recent years been asserted by two writers¹¹ on Newfoundland that John Cabot discovered and named St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland, on St. John's day, 1497, the date on which he first saw the land of America. On an examination of the account of John Cabot's voyage I fail to find any authority for this assertion. It has also been contended by these writers that Cape Bonavista was the landfall of Cabot, and Judge Prowse, the author of the "History of Newfoundland," vigorously maintained that this was the case and relied very strongly on tradition.¹² Messrs. HARRISSE,¹³ DAWSON,¹⁴ BIGGAR,¹⁵ and others, however, do not agree with Judge Prowse and argue that Cape Breton was the land first seen by Cabot. In his article on John Cabot in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,¹⁶ as well as in his "Voyages of the Cabots,"¹⁷ H. P. Biggar speaks of the landfall of Cabot as some place on the American continent, and not Newfoundland. If Newfoundland was not the landfall of Cabot, he could not have discovered and named St. John's on St. John's day, 1497.

But supposing that Cape Bonavista was the landfall of Cabot, we have it on record that he made the land, with a large island lying off it. There is no large island lying off Cape Bonavista nor off St. John's. Cabot had been at sea for fifty-seven days in a caravel of fifty tons, and it is certain that when he made the land he would at once seek anchorage to obtain wood and water and proceed to clean his ship.

¹⁰ Isaac Taylor, Canon of York: *Names and Places*, Rivington, London, 1864, 1865, 1873.

¹¹ The late D. W. Prowse and the late Archbishop Howley in Newfoundland newspapers and magazines.

¹² D. W. Prowse: *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records*, London, 1895.

¹³ Henry HARRISSE: work cited in footnote 9.

¹⁴ S. E. Dawson: *The Voyages of the Cabots in 1497 and 1498*, trans. Royal Soc. of Canada: Section II, Vol. 12, 1894, pp. 51-112.

¹⁵ H. P. Biggar: *The Voyages of the Cabots and of the Corte-Reals to North America and Greenland*, *Revue Hispanique*, Vol. 10, 1903, pp. 485-593.

¹⁶ 11th edit., 1910-11.

¹⁷ See footnote 15.