



Jens Munk's map of his 1619 to 1620 exploration of Hudson Strait.

[THE OUTPORTS]

It is composed of both the big island, which everyone recognizes as Newfoundland, and the large triangle of Labrador on the mainland above.

The island is subject to great winds and frequent fog, but the Gulf Stream keeps the temperatures along the southern coasts between the twenties and the seventies. A half million people are spread thinly over the island triangle. They are the most ethnically homogeneous in Canada; over ninety per cent are of English, Irish or Scottish descent. St. John's, the capital has about 110,000 and Corner Brook more than 25,000 inhabitants; Stephenville, Wabana and Gander, have fewer than 10,000 each.

St. John's harbour on the eastern edge of the Avalon Peninsula is a marvel. One mile long and nearly a half mile wide, it is surrounded by steep, sometimes precipitous rocky slopes and approached by a single entrance, the Narrows, 250 yards wide and flanked by 500-foot cliffs.

St. John's first permanent residence was built in 1528, when Henry VIII was on the throne, and the governor was a fishing admiral — the captain of the first ship to arrive each season. The town endured, huddled around the harbour, through difficult centuries, and today it is uniquely charming, dominated by the beautiful Romanesque Catholic and the Anglican cathedrals, both built in 1850. The city has grown since the extension of the Trans-Canada Highway and the inauguration of mainland jet plane service. The harbour offers side-loading containerized freight services, and there are large new buildings outside the old town. The unlovely but imposing Confederation Building, which houses the provincial government, was built in 1960, and the Arts and Culture Centre, in 1967.

The people in the Confederation Building have made various efforts to modernize Newfoundland, some more successful than others. The first program of community centralization was inaugurated in 1953 for the purpose of moving families from isolated outports. It was replaced by a joint federal-provincial program in 1965.

The outports are tiny fishing villages that are accessible only by water. Most are on the southern coast and, therefore, "out" of St. John's. The government moved some three hundred communities — people, buildings and boats — and added them to larger settlements, such as Come By Chance. The people of the outports approved the theory but frequently resisted the application. As one official said, "the resettlement centres are like heaven. Everyone wants to go there, but not just yet."

The program cost about \$10 million and ended March 31, 1977. The official emphasis is now on the development of resources in the outports that remain.

L'Anse au Meadow is a grassy cape at the top of the island, and a thousand years ago the Vikings briefly established Vinland there. The remains of eight turf houses and an iron works were discovered in 1960, and the whole village is now being excavated. It is surrounded by wind-swept muskeg and is appealing, though it may well have been pleasanter in 1000 AD. It is across the Strait of Belle Isle from the mainland part of Newfoundland, the cold coast of Labrador.

The few Inuit men, women and children who live along that cold coast, follow the patterns of their ancestors, with modifications. Nain, 300