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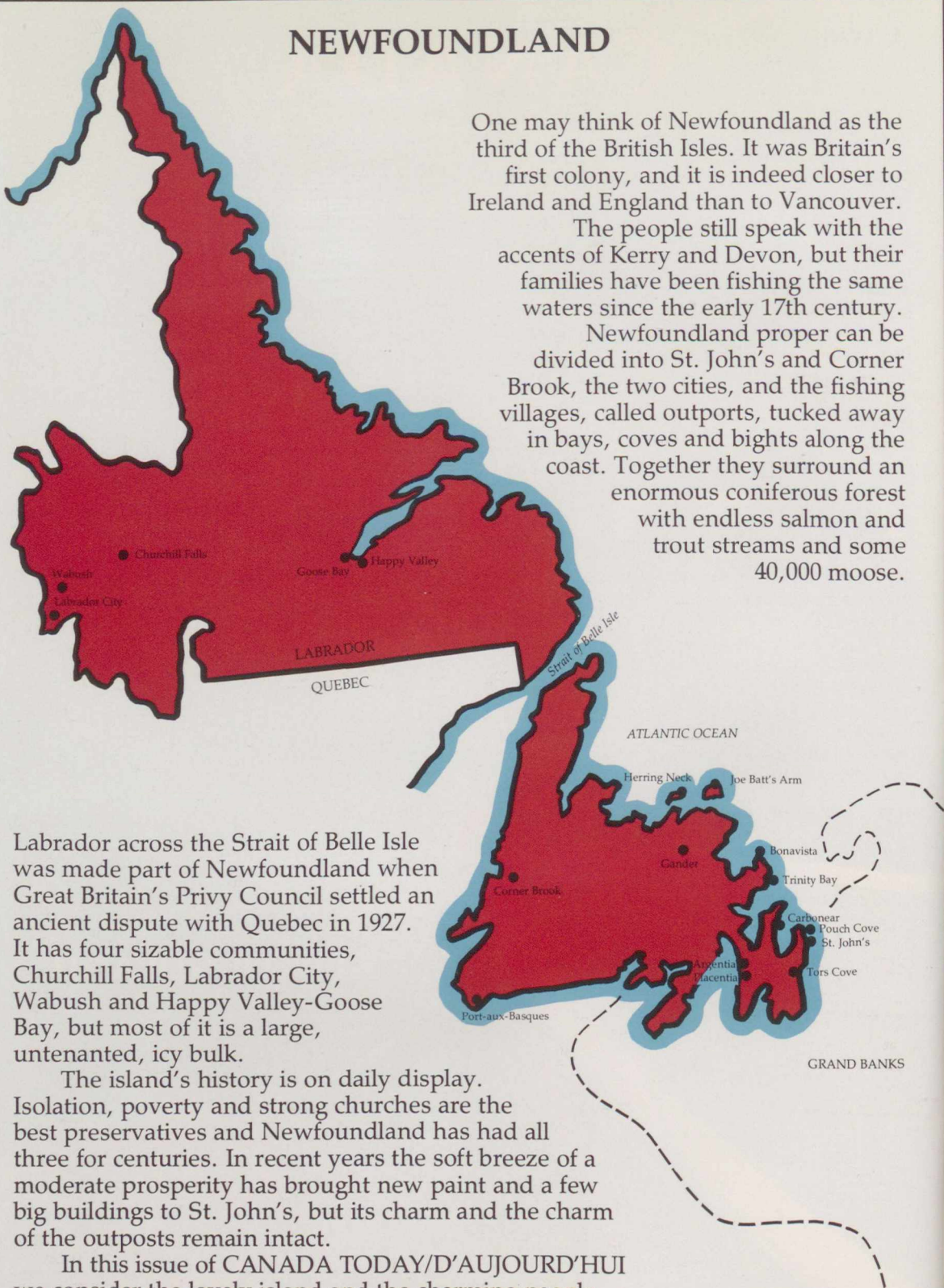
NEWFOUNDLAND

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One may think of Newfoundland as the third of the British Isles. It was Britain's first colony, and it is indeed closer to Ireland and England than to Vancouver.

The people still speak with the accents of Kerry and Devon, but their families have been fishing the same waters since the early 17th century.

Newfoundland proper can be divided into St. John's and Corner Brook, the two cities, and the fishing villages, called outposts, tucked away in bays, coves and bights along the coast. Together they surround an enormous coniferous forest with endless salmon and trout streams and some 40,000 moose.



Labrador across the Strait of Belle Isle was made part of Newfoundland when Great Britain's Privy Council settled an ancient dispute with Quebec in 1927. It has four sizable communities, Churchill Falls, Labrador City, Wabush and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but most of it is a large, untenanted, icy bulk.

The island's history is on daily display. Isolation, poverty and strong churches are the best preservatives and Newfoundland has had all three for centuries. In recent years the soft breeze of a moderate prosperity has brought new paint and a few big buildings to St. John's, but its charm and the charm of the outposts remain intact.

In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI we consider the lovely island and the charming people, past and present.

A Word or Two

Among the people of St. John's and the southern outports some may still speak with an Irish accent. Scholars have fixed it as that of County Wexford.

In the north of the island the intonations are English, the voices of Dorset or Devon three centuries past.

The ones with the brogue have many words in Irish still: *ballyrag* (abuse), *blather* (nonsensical talk), *dudeen* (a pipe), *jackeen* (a rascally boy), *omadhaun* (a foolish person), *pishoque* (an unlikely story).

The northerners still use English words long lost in England: *scrimshank* (evasive hesitation), *switchel* (cold tea), *tuckamore* (a low clump of trees).

The Irish vocabulary is rich in one-word descriptions of particular people, usually unflattering. Most begin with the letter *s*—*sadogue*, a fat, easygoing person; *scut*, a dirty, mean one; *shooneen*, a coward; *slieveen*, a deceitful person.

The Newfoundlanders also have their own aphorisms. "An honest man when there are no anchors around," is, of course, ironic. Most of the sayings speak for themselves: "A fisherman is one rogue, a merchant is many." "In a leaky punt with a broken oar, 'tis always best to hug the shore."

Some require explanation—"Nofty was forty when he lost the pork," for example, does not concern a middle-aged man who lost a pig. Nofty was holding a trump and close to winning when he lost the game of cards—never be sure of anything or, as a mainlander might say, don't count your chickens.





Joey Smallwood signs agreement admitting Newfoundland to Confederation.

The Recent Past

Newfoundland, a distinct unit of the British Empire for almost 400 years, joined the Canadian Confederation, somewhat reluctantly, in 1949.

It became part of a much larger and richer economy: social services multiplied, the educational system expanded and a new highway system connected the outports and St. John's.

Premier Joey Smallwood, a remarkable man, engineered the junction and became in the process the last of Canada's Founding Fathers (the others had arranged the original get-together in 1867). His government attacked some basic economic problems with great energy and mixed results. It arranged the construction of a huge hydroelectric plant at Churchill Falls in Labrador, a technological success producing over 5,000 megawatts, but so far something of an economic disappointment. Newfoundland signed a sixty-five year agreement to supply the province of Quebec with power at a very low fixed price per kilowatt hour. The enormous rise in energy prices which soon followed left Newfoundland at a considerable disadvantage. The province is now trying to renegotiate the contract.

The great watershed of the island services a large hydro plant at Bay D'Espoir, and another is under construction at Cat Arm in White Bay.

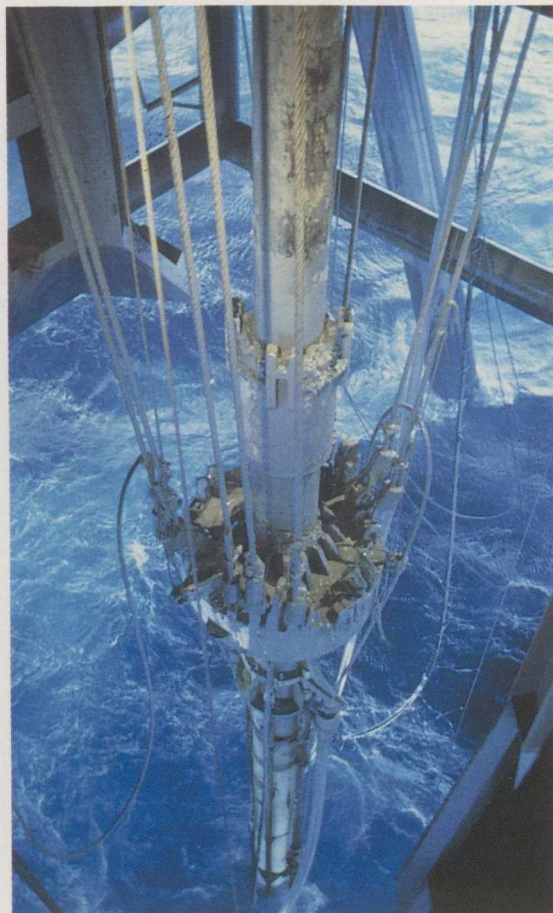
The discovery and development of great offshore oil fields and the restructuring of the fisheries, on the other hand, should bring new money and new opportunities. Problems persist, but prospects have never been better.

Offshore Oil

The Grand Banks of Newfoundland are composed of oil- and gas-rich sediments 13,000 feet deep. Oil company surveys discovered the trove in the sixties, and by 1965 Amoco had acquired exploration rights to 34 million acres. The next year Amoco and Imperial drilled and found traces of methane gas at Tors Cove. Pan Am drilled at Grand Falls and found nothing of value. In 1971 drilling was extended to the Labrador Margin. Drilling was suspended on the Banks after forty dry holes but begun on Newfoundland's northeast shelf. By 1976 three wells on the shelf and a couple on the Banks had showed promising but not commercial results, and wet gas was found at three sites off Labrador.

In 1979 wells in a 525,000-acre block in the Avalon Basin of the northern Grand Banks (controlled by Mobil but drilled by Chevron) tested out with a production of 11,415 barrels of high quality oil a day with an estimated potential of 20,000 barrels. It was the first field on the North American Atlantic shelf thought to be capable of commercial production. A number of step-out wells have confirmed its value.

The Hibernia field on the edge of the Grand Banks has established recoverable reserves of 1.85 billion barrels of oil and 2 trillion cubic feet of gas. Only two fields in the North Sea are larger.



There have also been significant discoveries in the Labrador Margin, five gas and one oil strike since 1971, but they have not been close enough together to make them commercial.

All in all the future seems promising. Commercial production is expected to begin in the 1990's. Natural gas estimates run between 20 trillion and 300 trillion cubic feet, with the lower estimate considered close to a certainty.

At the moment, however, progress is hampered by an ownership dispute. The federal and provincial governments both claim the offshore fields and control of the eventual huge tax revenues. Newfoundland's highest court last winter ruled in favour of the federal position, but the issue is still before the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Fisheries

When John Cabot found the New Isle he noted that fish could be dipped up in a basket. It is still possible to catch caplin in buckets or to scoop them up on beaches in early summer.

The fisheries—the greatest in the world—have been the basis of Newfoundland's economy since Cabot's day and they are so still.

For some centuries the boats hauled in great quantities of fresh fish which were salted and dried. The villages had acres of cod flaked out on wooden frames drying in the crisp air. They were sold very cheaply. The development of modern freezer boats meant that fish could be frozen immediately, but technology brought problems. Foreign flag fishing factories came and stayed for months. The huge vessels swooped into a fishing area, hauled in fish, processed them and froze them, then moved on after they had depleted the resource. That problem was met when Canada (and the United States as well) extended control of the fishing grounds to two hundred miles offshore. The extension led to strict conservation controls which would give the local fishermen the major share.

It seemed the opportunity the industry had been waiting for. The number of small inshore boats expanded rapidly. New processing plants were built, and then the bubble broke. Recession and high interest rates added enormous and unexpected costs. A special Task Force on Atlantic Fisheries studied the problems which affect fishermen in all the Atlantic provinces and made recommendations in February 1983. Some recommendations—such as a continuing emphasis on high quality—were adopted at once, but the more involved ones were discussed at length. Meanwhile the major market in the United States grew slack and the value of the catch dropped. By year's end it would total \$122.8 million, down from \$140.9 in 1982.

Last summer the federal government moved in with a plan to merge three firms, the province's two largest, Fishery Products Ltd. and Lake Group Ltd., and the smaller firm of John Penney & Sons Ltd. Together they had sixteen plants and sixty-eight trawlers. The reorganization plan was debated by the fishermen's union, the provincial government, the companies, and the Bank of Nova Scotia, the major creditor. Last fall a settlement emerged, involving recapitalization and a restructuring that it is hoped will streamline processing and put new life in the old industry.



Cod drying in the sun.

A Short History

John Cabot sailed from Bristol to Newfoundland in 1497, and an entry in the Crown's Privy Purse expenses proves it: "To hym who found the New Isle 10 pounds."

Sir Humphrey Gilbert came in 1583 and made formal claim on behalf of the Queen. By that time the island was "very populous and much frequented" by fishermen, part pirates, part traders. They were from a half dozen European countries and no one was in charge.

Trinity Bay became an English settlement in 1558 and John Guy established the first chartered colony at Cupids Harbour in Conception Bay in 1610.

The first fishing admiral—the master of the first English ship to arrive in the spring—took over the same year and was responsible for maintaining some kind of peace and order.

The system was formalized under William of Orange, and it lasted until 1711 when Captain Henry Osbourne became the Naval Governor. The

island became a military base but remained primarily a fishing resource. William King, Under Secretary of the American Department of State, would write in 1793, "Newfoundland has been considered in all former times as a great ship moored near the Banks during the fishing season for the convenience of English fishermen only." Nevertheless some sailors—carpenters who'd been left ashore as "winter crews" to cut timbers and others who'd simply jumped ship—found havens in hard-to-get-to outports. The governors were instructed to withhold "whatever might

encourage them to settle on the island." The rude houses along the shore were meant for summer shelter only, and it was against the law to have an indoor fireplace. When fireplaces were found the house was burned down. It was not until 1813 that settlers were allowed to own land and build year-round houses.

The first resident governor, Vice-Admiral Pickmore, was appointed in 1816 and he and his successors ruled alone until 1855, when the first House of Assembly met and what might be termed the modern era began.

St. John's

"Canada's most dramatic historic and lovable little port." Harry Bruce in *Atlantic Insight*.

For the visitors who come by sea St. John's is approached through a gap in grey-green cliffs. It rises from the shore in regular tiers, a rolling, often misty terrain of modest, square frame buildings vividly painted.

Six great structures tower above the humbler

roofs, three old, three relatively new. When the Catholic Basilica was built a century ago, it was the largest church in North America. The Anglican Cathedral was the first example of Gothic architecture in the New World.

The massive grey limestone Colonial Building was built in 1847. The fourth tall building is Atlantic Place, a red brick geometric pile on the waterfront, which houses shops, parked cars and government offices. The fifth and sixth are the Royal Trust Building and Toronto Dominion Place, both office buildings.

Water Street, the first terrace, parallel to the sea, 100 yards from the water's edge, is the oldest thoroughfare in North America. It probably began in the late 1400s as a beach on which sailors bartered goods, and it has housed shops and business offices for centuries. It still has Harvey's, founded in 1770, and Bowring Brothers Retail Store, which arrived in 1811.

In the 1880s part of the street was still only six feet wide. It was then and is still a good street for walking.

The town's most resplendent hotel, the Newfoundland, above Water St. at Cavendish Square, is on the old site of Fort William, built in 1623. Across the street a stone cross commemorates Ethel Dickensen, who died nursing the sick during the great flu epidemic of 1918. Water Street is below, down the Hill O'Chips, which dates from the 1500s and may be the oldest short street in North America. Turn right on Water to Coghane, laid out in 1834 to link the waterfront to Government House. The biggest park in downtown St. John's is on the right, terraced on a lush, grassy slope, flanked by flights of stairs and topped by the Memorial to World War I. Halfway up the flight on the right is the Crow's Nest, a celebrated World War II officers' club, still in operation. A captured German periscope jutting through the roof offers a nice view of the harbour. The club's site has been devoted to alcoholic consumption, off and on, since 1750 when it was a tavern called the Ship. The last murder by sword in St. John's took place at the Ship in 1779 when Michael Darrigan dispatched Cornelius Gallery with a cutlass.

Newfoundlanders found individual ways to



St. John's Harbour.



St. John's. In the centre is the Court House built in 1904. Above is the Anglican Cathedral first built in 1816 and rebuilt in 1842 and 1892 after destruction by fire. At the top is the Catholic Basilica of St. John the Baptist which was built in 1850.

fight the first World War. The War Memorial has Liberty holding a torch and bronze figures representing not only the Army and Navy but also the Forestry Corps and the Merchant Marine.

At the bottom of the slope is a plaque with an inscription penned by Rudyard Kipling in one of his less inspired moments: "Close to this commanding and historic spot Sir Humphrey Gilbert landed on the fifth day of August, 1583, and in taking possession of the new found land in the name of his Sovereign Queen Elizabeth thereby founded Britain's overseas empire." That was, of course, 401 years ago and Newfoundland had a big celebration last summer. Sir Humphrey, the half brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, drowned when his ship went down on the voyage home, but companion ships carried the tale home.

Opposite the Memorial is the King George V Institute, whose cornerstone was laid by the King himself by remote control from Buckingham Palace, on his coronation day, June 22, 1911. He returned from his installation ceremonies at 4 p.m. and pushed a button which sent an electric charge across the Atlantic and dropped the stone into soft cement. The Institute once served as a home for fishermen visiting from the outports. In 1914 it received the frozen bodies of seventy-eight sealers trapped on the ice by a blizzard. The bodies, in groups of two or three in a single block of ice, were thawed out in vats of warm water in the Institute's basement. It now houses the Newfoundland Lung

Association, the Newfoundland Safety Council and St. John Ambulance.

Walk on to the intersection of Prescott Street, once the home of a newspaper called the *Public Ledger*. On Christmas night, 1833, a mob gathered here to lynch the paper's proprietor, Henry Winton, a severe critic of Roman Catholicism. They were dissuaded by troops, but a few years later masked men waylaid him while he was out on horseback and cut his ears off.

Walk past another flight of stairs going up to Duckworth Street and you come to the looming



Water Street, looking west from Job's, 1892.

grey eminence of the Courthouse, built in 1892. It also serves as the city's lockup. Move along past the intersection of McMurdo's Lane to the middle of the block and the modern, geometric Atlantic Place complex on the south side of the street. Beyond, at the foot of McBride's Hill, is Bowring Brothers Retail store, which displays models of the company's famous shipping fleet. Many of the ships had names out of Shakespeare—*Portia*, *Rosalind*, *Florizel*, *Sylvia* and *Stephano*. *Stephano* was sunk by a German submarine in 1916 while en route to New York. Another Bowring ship, the *SS Terra Nova*, carried Capt. Robert Scott on his last and fatal voyage to Antarctica. Newfoundland's second Prime Minister, John Kent, once had business offices where Bowring's Beck's Cove entrance now stands. A local physician, Dr. Edward Kielly, pulled Kent's nose one day in 1833 while Kent was standing in his doorway. Kent's friends in the Legislature attempted to call Kielly to account, but he refused to accept their authority and carried the case to the Privy Council in London. The Council not only agreed with him, it passed an Act severely limiting the powers of all Colonial legislatures.

At the corner of Springdale is one of the oldest residences in St. John's, built in 1834 as the home of the manager of Newman & Co., purveyors of Newman's Celebrated Newfoundland Port. The port is still shipped from Portugal to St. John's.

If you are a tireless walker you can turn left at the railway station, cross the tracks in front of the Canadian National roundhouse, and take a look at the direct descendant of the first floating dry dock in North America, built in 1861. It was followed by the largest dry dock in the world, built in 1883. The present one was a reconstruction of one built in 1925. A new, modern synchrolift was added in 1983.

Cross the Waterford River, turn left on Southside Road and walk as far as the green slope and you'll be near the unmarked grave of Shanadithit, the last of the Beothuck Indians, who died in 1829. As you near the end of the pavement you'll come to Pancake Rock. From 1770 on, a heavy chain was stretched across the Narrows each evening to keep out enemy warships and pirates. An anti-submarine net was hung in the same span in World War II.

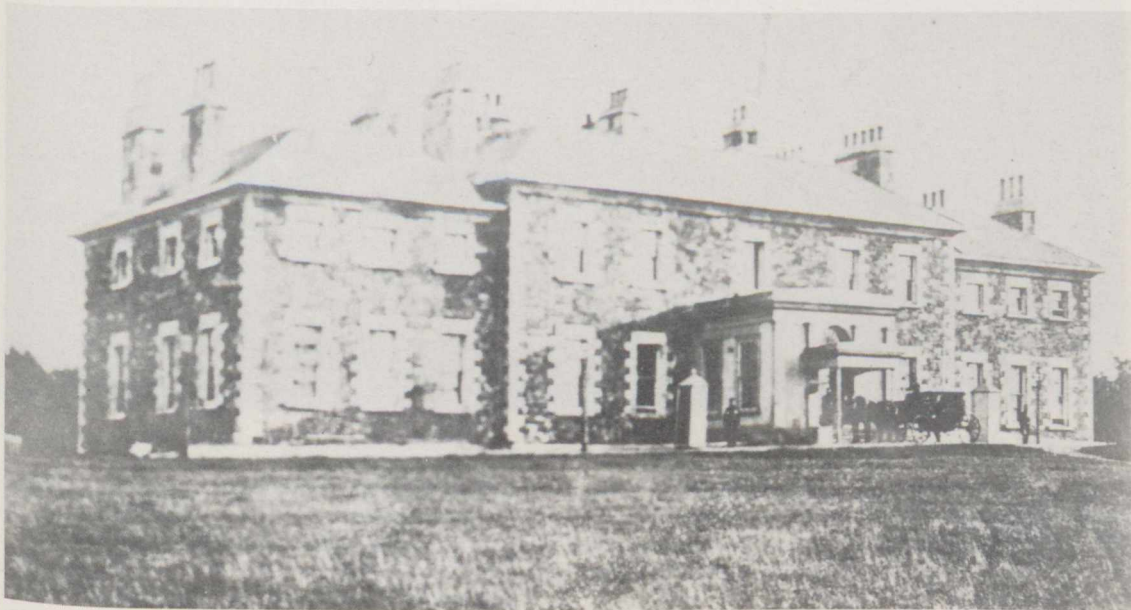


Victoria Street, St. John's.

Signal Hill

Across from Pancake Rock—at the other end of the submarine net—is Signal Hill, a national park. It is historic, unique and often breezy, and it overlooks Cape Spear, the most easterly point in North America. (When the Prince and Princess of Wales visited last June the Cape was shrouded in fog.)

The park is rich in the remains of ancient forts and batteries. The ruins of the old hospital building where radio and television were born is nearby. In 1901 Guglielmo Marconi received the first wireless message transmitted across the Atlantic. The hospital, built as a barracks in 1792, caught fire and burned to the foundations in 1920.



Government House

In 1825 Governor Sir Thomas Cochrane decided to build himself a modest residence for £ 8,700. By the time it was completed it had cost the British government £ 40,000 (the equivalent of about \$1.5 million today). It was the most expensive private dwelling in North America, and it has a moat, believed to be the only one around a private dwelling on the continent. The architect in England supposedly confused Newfoundland with the West Indies and put it there to protect the governor from snakes. There are, however, no snakes in Newfoundland. Government House has been the home of the governors and lieutenant governors of Newfoundland for over 150 years.

The Colonial Building

The white limestone Colonial Building on Colonial Street was the seat of government in Newfoundland for over 100 years and the site of at least four major riots.

The legislature first met there in January 1850, and Newfoundland's first bank robbery came nine months later when £ 413 was taken from the savings bank in the basement.

On April 5, 1932, a throng of 3,500 filled the square in front of the building, bands playing and leaders shouting. They demanded that the legislature investigate the behaviour of the Prime Minister, Sir Richard Squires.

Police were dragged from their horses, windows smashed and the front door battered down. Everything except the galleries and chandeliers was destroyed in the upper and lower Houses, and a piano was dragged outside and splintered.

The Prime Minister hid in the basement until 7:30 p.m. when he slipped out to a waiting car. As he drove off he was spotted and the car was stopped by the front gates. Sir Richard leaped from the car, ran into a house across the street and out the back and over a fence into Bannerman Street and thence to Cochrane Street, where he got into another car which carried him to a refuge on Waterford Ridge Road.

An election was called and Sir Richard was, not surprisingly, defeated. He then went into voluntary exile.

As the size of the legislature increased after Confederation, the old building became too small and work was begun on Confederation Building. The last legislative session in the Colonial Building was held in July 1959.

Other Places



Pouch Cove.

Some of the first settlers in Newfoundland (ship jumpers from the fishing fleet) stayed naturally on the Avalon Peninsula, land shaped like a ragged *H* and attached to the mainland by an extension of the crossbar.

St. John's is on the eastern or seaward side of the *H*, near the top of the right-hand vertical stroke. The peninsula is indented in the proper places by Conception Bay, Trinity Bay, St. Mary's Bay and Placentia Bay.

ARGENTIA on Placentia Bay is well remembered by tens of thousands of American Navy and Air Force men who served there in World War II. The U.S. Navy still has people stationed there.

PLACENTIA, a small, pleasant place near Argentia, is pretty much surrounded by water. It was the French capital of Newfoundland in the 17th century but the name is a corruption of the Basque name, *Plaisance*. The Basques came first, probably, very early in the 16th century and were followed by the French, who came as fishermen and remained for awhile as soldiers. They fortified Placentia in 1662, but the English took over without firing a shot by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

CARBONEAR, in Conception Bay, includes Irish Town, Crocker's Cove and South Side. It is mentioned in old records from 1550, and a pirate captured a French vessel there in 1614. In 1627 it had twenty-two dwellings. According to legend Sheila Na Geira fell in love with a privateer named Capt. Gilbert Pike in 1600, and they married and had the first white child born in Newfoundland. Their graves remain in a small garden.

BONAVISTA, John Cabot's landfall, is on the mainland, northwest of the Avalon Peninsula at the top of a peninsula of its own, on Bonavista Bay. It has a population of 5,000 and is the largest fishing village on the east coast. It is a particularly pleasant place with many attractions for the visitor. You can buy snow crab directly from the fishermen or cooked from a plant at Valley Field. It has blueberries galore—a million pounds are harvested annually. A ferry makes the round trip from Valley Field to the island of Greenspond. Deadman's Bay Beach has excellent cold-water swimming in summer.

CORNER BROOK is on the other side of the island, the west coast, up Humber Arm from the Bay of Islands. It is, by contrast with almost everything else in Newfoundland, startlingly new. The giant Bowater Newfoundland Ltd. pulp and paper factory (which is now up for sale) was founded here in 1923 and Corner Brook grew out of the village of Fisher's Mill. The city has a good choice of hotels and motels and restaurants and an eighteen-hole golf course. It also has good skiing at Marble Mountain and one of the longest ski seasons in Canada. It is a good jumping off point for Gros Morne National Park some fifty miles to the north.

These villages offer only a sampling. Newfoundland's endless bays, coves, arms and bights are lined with small fishing outports, and almost all of them are now accessible by road. The island's principal road runs northeast from the ferry landing at Port-aux-Basques on the south-



Herring Neck.

western corner of the island to, among other places, Crabbes River Park, Barachois Pond Park, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Sandy Lake, Birchy Lake, Indian River and Springdale, then south to Catamaran and Aspen Brook, west to Windsor and Grand Falls, northeast to Bishops Falls and Notre Dame, southeast to Gander and Terra Nova National Park, then south to the Avalon Peninsula and St. John's.

For more information about Newfoundland's attractions, write or call:

Tourism
Newfoundland Department of
Development
 P.O. Box 2016
 St. John's, Newfoundland
 A1C 5R8
 Telephone (709) 737-2830

Strange-Sounding Names and Faraway Places

Not all Newfoundland's place names are unique. New Brunswick has a Saint John (though it lacks an 's'), and Main Brook, King's Point and Grand Falls would seem at home on maps from Texas to Ontario.

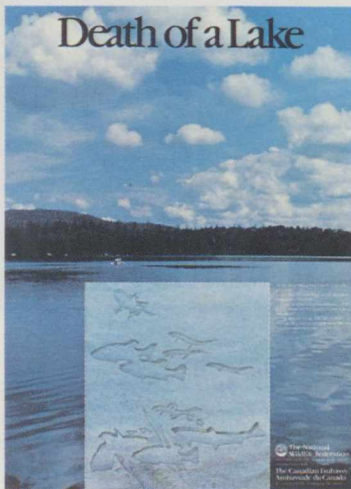
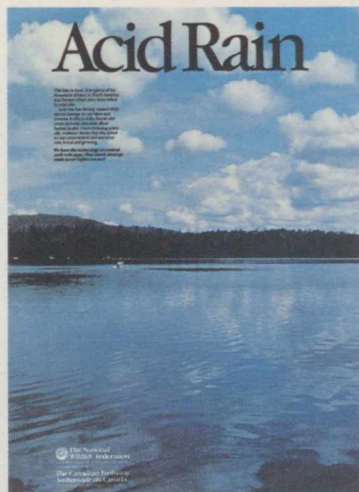
But many others are unlikely. Some have gathered a measure of fame abroad—Joe Batt's Arm and Come-By-Chance, for example—but there are hundreds just as striking, tucked away in coves, arms and bights.

Try these: Jerry's Nose, Blow-Me-Down, Run-by-Guess, Bleak Joke Cove, Nancy Oh, Breakheart Point, Famish Gut, Empty Basket, Cupids, Horse Chops, Hare's Ears Point, Mistaken Point and Sitdown Pond.

Errors of Note

In Volume 14, Number 6 of CANADA TODAY/ D'AUJOURD'HUI, *Canada Looks South* we confused the Mexican Emperor Iturbide, who ruled in 1822-23, with the Emperor Maximilian, whose brief and troubled reign ended in 1867. Many readers wrote to point this out. Many other readers challenged the derivation of the word "Gringos," attributed by us to J.C.M. Ogelsby in his excellent book *Gringos from the North*. Mr. Ogelsby said the word was compacted from a song sung persistently by American soldiers in the Mexican-American War which began "Green Grow the Lilacs." It seems clear that he and we were wrong. It is, we are persuaded, most probably a corruption of the word *Griego*, meaning Greek, which was used to denote all foreigners. *Gringo*, at any rate, was in use in both Spain and the New World much earlier.

Acid Rain Poster Offer



We have available a limited number of Acid Rain posters. If your organization can display a set, please let us know. Sorry, but we cannot send them to individuals. Available in sets of six only.

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