

THE NEWELL FAMILY

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The oldest tombstone in Trinity Bight, located in the backyard of Richard Jones on property formerly owned by Captain Robert and Mary Jones (nee Newell) in Trinity East, commemorates Mary's great-grandfather Thomas Newell who died June 20, 1724 at the age of 78. Thomas was my 7th great-grandfather. He owned Newell's Point and nearly all the land in Pease Cove. Captain James Cook's 1762 chart of Trinity Harbour indicates five or six houses on Newell's Point at the entrance to God's Cove where the Newells first settled. Captain Robert Jones, my 4th great-grandfather and earliest verifiable Jones ancestor, married Mary Newell September 6, 1788. The Newells originated from Poole and its hinterland including Christchurch and Ringwood in Hampshire; and, Winborne, Wareham and other places in Dorsetshire. They were agents in Newfoundland for non-resident merchants; captains; manufacturers; fish merchants; planters or boatkeepers resident in Newfoundland; shipowners; and artisans or tradesmen.

The census of 1675 enumerated two Thomas Newells: one at English Harbour was married with a son and a daughter, nine men servants, two boats, a stage and a trainvat; the other at Bonavista with five men, one boat and a stage was not married. There are six Thomas Newells and three Jonah Newells. I have appended subscripts which denote their generation to distinguish between them; for example, Thomas Newell₁ is first generation. Bruce Whiffen in Prime Berth: An account of Bonavista's Early Years, asserted that the Thomas enumerated at English Harbour in 1675 was the Thomas Newell Senior buried at Trinity East but, he would have been too young in 1675 to have had a grown son living independently in Bonavista. Therefore it may be presumed that the

unmarried Thomas₂ enumerated at Bonavista in 1675 was the son of the married Thomas₁ at English Harbour and the Thomas Newell Senior buried in Trinity East. He would have been born about 1646 and it his father, Thomas₁, would have been born about 1621. Another possibility is that there was only one Thomas Newell counted twice at both English Harbour and Bonavista in 1675.

The census of 1677 enumerated only one Thomas Newell. He was located at Bonavista, married with three sons but no daughters, employed fourteen men servants and one woman servant, possessed a house, a storeroom, two gardens, a stage, a trainvat, three flakes, eight cattle, twenty sheep and twelve hogs. It would appear that Thomas₁ had lost a daughter, gained a son and joined his eldest son Thomas₂ at Bonavista.

Captain James Storey's 1681 Census of Trinity identified Thomas Newell as a planter at Bonavista. He was married with four children. This was probably Thomas₂, who would have been about thirty-five years old and more than likely married by this time since he sired eleven children. If it was Thomas₁, he would have fathered a son after the age of fifty-six, not impossible but unlikely. If Thomas₁ was alive in 1681, his whereabouts were not recorded.

The census of 1708 enumerated two Thomas Newells at Green Island, a small island near Cape Bonavista, and James Newell at Bonavista. Thomas Newell Senior was married with three children, twelve servants, two boats and a skiff. Thomas Newell Junior was married with four children, twelve servants, two boats and a skiff. James Newell was married with one child, five servants, a boat and a skiff. Since the population of Newfoundland at this time was only about 1,400, the Newell family and their servants accounted for more than three percent of the entire population! I believe the Thomas Senior buried in Richard Jones' backyard in Trinity East was the Thomas₂ enumerated at Bonavista in 1675 and the Thomas Senior enumerated at Green Island in 1708; Thomas Junior was his son, Thomas₃; and, James at

Bonavista was also his son. Thomas₁ probably died before 1708 since he would have been 87 years old or more.

Thomas₂ had four daughters and seven sons. James, who died before his father had a daughter Elizabeth who married an Abbot. Three sons, including Thomas₃, died before their father. Only three sons survived him: Edward, the eldest living when his father died, survived his father by fourteen or fifteen years and died without issue about 1739; Nehemiah also died without issue before his brothers Edward and Jonah₃ the last survivor. Jonah₃ of God's Cove and Catherine had five daughters and two sons: Catherine, Hannah, Honour, Patience, Ursula, Thomas₄ and Jonah₄. Jonah₃ was survived by his wife Catherine and all of his children. Thomas₄ was younger than Jonah₄ but predeceased both his brother and his mother.

Without the benefit of court records pertaining to disputes involving ownership of land at both Trinity and Bonavista, between Jonah₄ and his cousin Elizabeth Abbot, it would not have been possible to reconstruct the genealogy of the first three generations of Newells in Newfoundland. Many of the attached Descendancy Chart dates prior to the beginning of St. Paul's parish registers have been deduced from these records.

September 17, 1754, at Trinity, John Lloyd commander of *H.M.S. Arundle* examined in court a complaint brought by Jonah Newell of God's Cove son of Jonah Newell deceased. In dispute was the ownership of a plantation in Trinity Harbour left by will dated March 19, 1742 of his father Jonah to his mother Catherine who died intestate. The plantation was decreed to be the joint property of Jonah and his sisters: Catherine, Hannah, Honour, Patience and Ursula.

October 13, 1757, at St. John's, Elizabeth Abbot of Bonavista, daughter of James Newell, son of Thomas Newell, claimed ownership of a plantation called Newell's Plantation, in possession of Jonah Newell, because she maintained her grandfather Thomas had left it to her father James and she was the heiress of her

father. Admiral Richard Edwards, Governor of Newfoundland, ordered arbitration by two of the oldest inhabitants of Bonavista, one chosen by each party.

September 13, 1764, at St. John's, Governor Hugh Palliser heard the case of Jonah Newell vs Elizabeth Abbot, a dispute over ownership of a plantation called Newell's Plantation, property of Jonah's grandfather Thomas who died intestate. Thomas' son and Jonah's uncle, Edward, being heir, took possession. When Edward died, Jonah's father Jonah, being the only issue living, took possession. Jonah's father Jonah left it by will to Jonah's brother Thomas. When Jonah's brother Thomas died, Jonah took possession but Elizabeth Abbot gave it to her son Richard Abbot. Palliser ruled, because James died before his father Thomas and Edward the eldest living son was the legitimate heir, Elizabeth had no right to it when her grandfather Thomas died nor could she have acquired any right since. However, the dispute did not end in 1764. The Governor subsequently issued two orders to a William Abbott to relinquish claim to a property or fishing room at Bonavista, known as Newell's Plantation, and to allow Jonah Newell peaceable possession of it, one dated September 21, 1779 and the other 2 October 2, 1780.

Jonah₄, born about 1728, died January 27, 1799 at the age of seventy-one and was buried in St. Paul's Anglican Church Cemetery, Trinity beside his wife Hannah who predeceased him January 6, 1888 at the age of fifty-two. Jonah married Hannah Mears prior to the census taken of Trinity in 1753 when his household and holdings consisted of two women, one child, three English and six Irish summer men servants, one English and three Irish winter servants, two boats and skiffs, a stage and a trainvat. Governor Richard King appointed him Justice of the Peace and Customs Officer at Trinity September 7, 1792. He was evidently a citizen of considerable prominence and substance.

Jonah₄ and his wife Hannah produced three sons: Thomas₅ (born July 27, 1758), Jonah₅ (born October 26, 1764) and James (born October 29,

1773); and four daughters: Mary (born June 16, 1760), Catherine (baptised November 2, 1762, died the following June), a second Catherine (born about 1780) and Grace (born July 2, 1771). James died before he was three years old May 21, 1776; Catherine (baptised 1762) did not survive her first year, dying June 14, 1763. There is no record of the birth or death of the child enumerated in the census taken of Trinity in 1753.

The second Catherine married Charles Newhook, a shipbuilder and leading citizen of New Harbour, January 17, 1804. His father, also named Charles, had been brought from England as a shipwright by Benjamin Lester. Charles Newhook the younger became a business partner of Benjamin Lester's successor George Garland for whom he managed a grog shop. His marriage to Catherine was shortlived; she died April 2, 1810. Mary married Robert Jones of Liverpool June 16, 1788 and became my 4th great-grandmother. After Robert's demise, she married Dennis Kitts, a cooper. She died November 9, 1841, at the age of eighty-one.

Not much is known about Jonah₅. The Parish Registers of St. Paul's Anglican Church, Trinity did not record his marriage, progeny or death. There is a single mention of a J. (possibly Jonah) Newell who witnessed a marriage between Charles Butler of Corfe Mullen, Dorset and Patience Verge of Bonaventure April 4, 1818. There are also references to a Jonah Newell as captain of two vessels trading between Poole and Newfoundland: *Joseph and Francis* (1797) and *Amy* (1799); and, *Adventure* trading between Dartmouth and Newfoundland in 1799. *Joseph and Francis* and *Amy* almost certainly were owned by Benjamin Lester.

Grace married Giles Hosier from Poole, who was agent to John Jeffrey, January 12, 1789. Giles was probably related to John Hosier who bought John Jeffrey's share of Jeffrey and Street when that company dissolved in 1789. John was a peripatetic, renaissance man: businessman, schoolmaster, seaman, a member of the masonic Benevolent Lodge, St. John's in 1811, and, in

1814, the first honorary member of Amity Lodge in Poole. Later in life he operated a school in Cinnamon Lane, Poole which taught reading, writing, arithmetic and navigation.

Grace and Giles Hosier had three sons and four daughters. Their first child Maria died at an early age. The eldest son William was lost at sea in October, 1812. The father Giles was buried in November. His son Giles died at age nine in December. Thomas Goodland was the sole son who survived his father. Elizabeth, the only daughter to stay in Bonavista, taught school before marrying Aaron Fifield of Trinity in 1815. Hannah Newell married John Cogden, an Oxford graduate in 1814. Jane Bland married a Methodist minister, Reverend Ninian Barr, a Scot. Mary also married a Methodist minister, Reverend Richard Knight, about 1820. Later they moved to Nova Scotia where their daughter Martha married Reverend John Allison who was related to Charles Frederick Allison who established, in 1839, Mount Allison University at Sackville, New Brunswick. Giles Hosier left an estate of £100 at his death in 1812. His widow Grace became a schoolteacher and the keeper of a boarding house at Bonavista. On the same day the replica of John Cabot's *Matthew* sailed into Bonavista, June 24, 1997, I viewed the United Church manse, which now stands on the site of the house formerly belonging to Grace Newell and Giles Hosier.

It may be assumed that Thomas₅ married Christian Wadman prior to the birth of their first child, Elizabeth, in 1792. The Return for Trinity of the Number of Houses, Inhabitants, Fishing Rooms, in the Winter of 1800-1801 is confusing. Thomas Newell, married with no children, occupied three houses and a fishing room at Trinity; and was married with three daughters at Heart's Content where he occupied two houses and two fishing rooms owned by Thomas Street, a Poole mariner, shipowner and merchant. Thomas and Christian had two daughters and one son by that time: Elizabeth Newell (born 1792); Hannah (born 1795); and, Thomas₆ (born 1798). They had two daughters and one son later: Amelia Adams (born 1805); Mary Catherine (born 1809); and, William

Wadman (born 1801).

Elizabeth married a Scot, William Alexander, and after his death in 1828 William Sweetland. On the same day I viewed the United Church manse on the former site of the Hosier house in Bonavista, I sighted William Alexander's headstone in the Anglican cemetery and viewed Bridge House, the oldest surviving residence in Newfoundland, built in 1814 for Elizabeth Newell and William Alexander. Amelia, who married Joseph Purchase October 9, 1843, died in 1868. Mary Catherine died at age eleven in 1820. Hannah's fate is not known. William Wadman commanded Garland's vessels between 1827 and 1833.

Thomas₅ changed residence frequently and owned property located in both Trinity and Bonavista Bays which perhaps explains the ambiguity in the Return for Trinity of the Number of Houses, Inhabitants, Fishing Rooms, in the Winter of 1800-1801. Two of his daughters, Elizabeth and Hannah, were born in Old Perlican. Mary Catherine was born in Greenspond. His son Thomas₆ was born at Heart's Content. September 1, 1821, Thomas₅ gave "all my plantation or fishing room...at the northside of Trinity Harbour, and known by the name of Newell's Room", to settle a debt of £60 owed his son-in-law, William Alexander. Thomas₅ claimed jointly with Giles Hosier in 1806 a fishing room at Bonavista also named Newell's Room. Thomas₅ died January 18, 1838 at Heart's Content. He bequeathed his plantations there and at Newell's Point, at the entrance to God's Cove, to his daughter Amelia. His plantation, "commonly called Blackmore's Room", then occupied by his sister, Mary Kitts, he left equally to his sons Thomas₆ and William, and his daughter Amelia. Gordon Handcock believes Blackmore's Room was property in Trinity East owned by John Black (shortened from Blackmore) who originated from Blackmore's Vale in North Dorset.

Thomas₆ was a bookkeeper for the prominent mercantile firm Slade and Elson at Carbonear in the 1820s and 1830s before joining the Wesleyan Methodists at the age of thirty-nine. In the early

1850s, Reverend Thomas Newell emigrated to the United States where he died October 12, 1865 at Malden, Massachusetts. He became the 2nd great-grandfather of Marion Whiting, my 5th cousin one generation removed, a resident of Abington, Massachusetts who transcribed the epitaph of Thomas₂ June 29, 1990 and to whom I will leave the task of recounting the Newell Family history after the sixth generation.

No historical or genealogical endeavour can be complete without according credit to those whose efforts and willingness to share their knowledge provide a foundation on which to build. My thanks to historical geographer Doctor Gordon Handcock who first alerted me to the existence of the Trinity East Newell headstone; to my cousin Marion Whiting, who transcribed the epitaph; and, to Bruce Whiffen whose synopsis of the Newell family in Prime Berth: An Account of Bonavista's Early Years complemented primary sources. I will conclude with a admonition. After Gordon Handcock told me about the Newell headstone, I asked my father, who possesses property in Trinity East formerly owned by Captain Robert and Mary Jones, why he had never mentioned it to me. He replied: "You never asked; I didn't think you would be interested." Since I began researching my family history, I have chastised myself numerous times for not asking my seniors, when I had the opportunity, the questions for which I now may never obtain answers. Always ask; always show interest. Our ancestors too often carry irretrievable knowledge to their graves.

DESCENDANCY CHART

1-- Thomas Newell (Abt 1621-Bef 1708)

sp-Not Known

2-- Thomas Newell (Abt 1646-1724)

sp-Not Known

3-- Daughter Name Unknown

3-- Daughter Name Unknown

3-- Daughter Name Unknown

3-- Daughter Name Unknown

3-- Thomas Newell (?-Bef 1724)

3-- Son Name Unknown (?-Bef 1724)

3-- Son Name Unknown (?-Bef 1724)

3-- James Newell (?-Bef 1724)

sp-Name Unknown

4-- Elizabeth Newell

sp-Abbott

3-- Edward Newell (?-Abt 1739)

3-- Nehemiah Newell (?-Bef 1754)

3-- Jonah Newell (Abt 1680-Abt 1743)

sp-Catherine (?-Abt 1753)

4-- Catherine Newell (?-Aft 1754)

4-- Hannah Newell (?-Aft 1754)

4-- Honour Newell (?-Aft 1754)

4-- Patience Newell (?-Aft 1754)

4-- Ursula Newell (?-Aft 1754)

4-- Jonah Newell (Abt 1728-1799)

sp-Hannah Mears (Abt 1736-1788)

5-- Thomas Newell (1758-1838)

sp-Christian Wadman (Abt 1774-1827)

6-- Elizabeth Newell (1792)

sp-William Alexander (Abt 1784-1828)

sp-William Sweetland

6-- Hannah Newell (1795)

6-- Thomas Newell (1798-1865)

sp-Mary Angel

6-- William Wadman Newell (1801)

6-- Amelia Adams Newell (1805-1868)

sp-Joseph Purchase

6-- Mary Catherine Newell (1809-1820)

5-- Mary Newell (1760-1841)

sp-Robert Jones Captain (Abt 1759-Bef 1801)

6-- Robert Newell Jones Captain (1790-Abt 1835)

sp-Elizabeth Pittman (?-Aft 1836)

6-- Jonah Jones (1793-1873)

sp-Mary Peckham (1794-1840)

sp-Mary Peckham (Fowloe) (1805-1872)

sp-Dennis Kitts

6-- No Issue

5-- Catherine Newell (Abt 1762-1763)

5-- Jonah Newell (1764)

5-- Grace Newell (1771)

sp-Giles Hosier (-1812)

5-- James Newell (1773-1776)

Key

Abt

about

Aft

after

Bef

before

sp

spouse

5-- Catherine Newell (Abt 1780-1810)

sp-Charles Newhook

4-- Thomas Newell (Aft 1728-Bef 1754)