

Pioneer Places And Family Names In Newfoundland

(Introduction)

In an early issue of the DAILY NEWS appears a lecture given by the late H. F. Shortis entitled "Pioneer Places in Conception Bay." The late Mr. Shortis, a native of Harbour Grace, was a journalist and historian of repute, and made many notable historical records of Newfoundland. He was a member of the Newfoundland Historical Society which in the first two decades of the present century was very much alive and active in collecting records and sponsoring lectures.

We have culled from this lecture—a very lengthy one, in fact a full newspaper page—what seemed to us might be of most interest to readers around Conception Bay, as some of whom are undoubtedly descendants of the families referred to in it.

But our headline title is "Pioneer places and family names in Newfoundland" not in Conception Bay only. We have been prompted to do this because recently we have received letters from people inquiring of their ancestors as also of land deeds and grants. The search into the latter must be slow and tedious and we hope to deal with it in some measure at a later date.

"Pioneer places and family names in Newfoundland" will have greater general interest than places and names in a mere particular section. We thought it therefore worthwhile from the records available to add to Mr. Shortis' title in order to complete the picture and give the names of the people and places in the then English populated area between Cape Bonavista and Cape Race, that do not come within the scope of Mr. Shortis' lecture.

this, apart from routine reports of naval captains which were upset by false representation of western adventurers who were opposed to settlement, very little history of the earlier settlers over a period of 100 years has been written. The records of those early days are notably scanty and scrappy. Referring to this lack, one historian says there was more written about the matrimonial affairs of Henry VIII, the cut of Elizabeth's ruff or the colour of her petticoats than about the daring fishermen who left little obscure western ports to found our Colonial Empire. At this time Newfoundland was England's greatest source of wealth.

The chapter created by the 1675 census contains a comparatively large amount of information of the settlers of that day. It answers many questions. It tells how many places were settled and how many people, men, women and children, with their family names, lived in those settlements. It tells how many boats, stages and stores there were and how much fish was caught, how many cows and how many sheep. It is, with this information, practically as complete as the latest census taken in the island. And this makes the 1675 census an important historical document, a chapter of history replete in the knowledge of the life and possessions of our forebears.

many even at that early period native of the soil and "true to the manner born."

French residents and places in other parts of the island are not in this category.

These names of people and places together with other information are taken from the first official census of the island by Sir John Berry. The year is 1675.

The document is headed thus: "Sept. 12th, 1675: H.M.S. Bristol at Bay Bulls: Sir John Berry's Report to the British Government is a complete census of Newfoundland from Cape Race to Cape Bonavista."

The words "complete census" do not necessarily mean that every head of the resident British population was counted. That would be almost an impossibility at that time even in the area covered. A few fishermen here and there operating out of some out-of-the-way coves and creeks could easily be overlooked. Some, too, we know had migrated north of Cape Bonavista. Some had fraternized with the French in other parts of the island. This is well attested in history. Sir Robert Robinson, for many years Captain-of-Convoys on the coast wrote that owing to the terrorism of the west country man, many of the planters had gone to live with the French. Prowse says that many families of the English were residing amongst the French at Placentia, St. Lawrence, Trepassay, Fortune Bay, etc., and that the French did all in their power to entice the English to settle at Placentia with them. King Louis about 1667 allowed masters of ships 5 livres for every man and 3 for every woman they carried to Placentia. Newfoundlanders were offered one year free subsistence—afterwards increased to 3.

These facts together with the policy of the settlers to understate their number in the island, did not make for a "complete census" as it was meant to be. It was sufficient, however, to serve the apparent purpose of the English Parliament and the West of England "mercantocracy" which we may explain later on.

The census of 1675 does, however, represent generally the number of settlements and settlers in the island at that time between Cape Bonavista and Cape Race.

The Census of 1675 is an important document. It is probably the first complete—as far as it could be completed—chapter of the early settlers at that particular time. Prior to

II FROM MR. SHORTIS' LECTURE

(From Daily News files)
We append firstly some excerpts from Mr. Shortis' lecture on "Pioneers of Conception Bay," as taken from the census of 1675, together with his interesting annotations:

Harbour Main: This settlement is the very oldest at the head of the Bay and there were no residents whatever at Portugal Cove or Topsail. There is only one settler mentioned, Jeremy Fortune of Harbour Main who appears to have been an old bachelor as there is no wife or children mentioned. He had 20 servants, 4 boats, and a train vat, but he had no stage. There were no residents at Avondale, Conception Harbour and Turk's Gut.

Brigus: The families here were John Gifford and wife, Matthew Gailor and two children, Richard Webb and wife. Each of these families had a stage and two boats, and employed 25 servants between them.

Cupids: The only person living there as stated in the old record was Stephen Atkins, the keeper of Mr. Butler's castle. From the information we have there can be very little doubt that this castle was the remains of John Guy's old fort or house. There was not a servant, boat, stage, or oil vat mentioned, just the caretaker of a valuable piece of property. I find there is one family of Atkins living on the north river of Clarke's Beach, but this family admits that their grandfather came from England within the past 100 years. But who was Mr. Butler? In all probability he belonged to the next settlement.

Port de Grave: Where the old record tells us there lived Thomas Butler and wife with 3 children. There were also Andrew Gregory and Michael Sprout. There were 50 head of cattle and 20 sheep. The last two families mentioned had no wives nor children, but the Butler family were prolific, and descendants of the family are still found in Port de Grave and in many other places in Newfoundland today.

In John Guy's diary 1612 we have the name of Samuel Butler mentioned as one of his men. It is more than probable that Thomas was a descendent of Samuel and that the Butler family today can claim the great distinction of being one of the oldest families in Newfoundland and have held the possession of the old homestead at Port de Grave for 300 years. There was no person living in Clarke's Beach where Guy had his grist mill or in Spaniard's Bay at

this time.

Bay Roberts: There was Joan Clay, a widow employing 4 servants, Anthony Farder and wife with 4 children and 15 servants. There were 30 head of cattle there at the time.

Bryants Cove: The only family mentioned there is Thomas Hobbs with 3 servants and 3 children.

Harbour Grace: There are 6 families named, Thomas Player and 3 children, Joan Hibbs, widow, Thomas Harton and wife, Lewis Guy and one child, Emelin Garland and one child, Arthur Batten, wife and 3 children. They had 7 boats and 95 head of cattle.

Mosquito Cove: William Davis and wife with five children, John Garland and wife with four children. They had 5 boats and 16 servants between them.

NOTES

John Garland and Emelin Garland were prominent persons when the census was taken at Harbour Grace and Mosquito (Bristol's Hope). We know from Captain Whitbourne's book of 1622 that Mr. Garland's house in London was a prominent landmark 50 years before. The Garlands have left a name written indelibly on the history of Newfoundland. The Garland family have still in their possession a document, now posted in the old family Bible received from the British Government thanking Charles Gar-

land for his eminent services in defending Carbonear Island against the French aggression.

William Davis was a pioneer of Mosquito in 1675. It is very probable that a William Davis

was a descendent of George Davis mentioned in John Guy's diary of 1612, and that the Davis's can claim with the Butlers descent from John Guy's first settlement.

Carbonear: Henry Pynn, wife and 6 children, John Edwards, wife and one child, William Brady, wife and four children, Richard Winsor, John Guy, Sr., wife and 5 children, John Guy, Jr., and wife. They had 8 boats, 30 servants and 100 head of cattle.

Crocker's Cove: Bartholomew Keys, wife and 2 children, Roger Butt, wife and 4 children.

NOTE

Roger Butt was the principal man mentioned in Crocker's Cove in 1675. Every old family in Conception Bay will tell you that the Butts are one of the oldest families in the island. Hakluyt mentions that when Thomas Butt returned home he was so changed on the voyage with hunger and misery that his father Sir William and his mother Lady Butt knew him not to be their own son until they found a secret mark which was a wart on one of his knees.

Other families mentioned in Guy's diary are Taylors, Perrys and Badcocks.

Clown's Cove: Joseph Parsons, wife and 5 children.

Bay de Verde: There were 11 families living there in 1675, 20 boats with 145 servants. The principal people there were four

families named Tavenor with 48 servants. A Tavenor was an officer on board a man of war and a surveyor. He made a tour of Newfoundland and drew up a map about 1745.