

Hare Bay

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HARE BAY, BONAVIDA BAY (inc. 1964; pop. 1981, 1,520). [Hare Bay is located within the traditional homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk.] An incorporated town located in a small bay of the same name on the north shore of Content Reach, one of the long, narrow reaches of central Bonavista Bay, north of Gambo. Like Gambo, Hare Bay was permanently settled in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century by people from the scattered island settlements of Bonavista Bay who realized in the rich timber stands of Hare Bay an opportunity to participate in the nascent but growing timber industry. This industry, which was stimulated by the construction of a trans-insular railway and increasing home and world markets, supported Hare Bay almost exclusively until the early 1960s, and created a logging settlement of considerable size and importance. According to M.F. Howley (n.d.) and W.B. Hamilton (1978) the name Hare Bay in Newfoundland, which also occurs on the Great Northern Peninsula, refers to the presence of the "Arctic hare *Lepus americanus* which formerly abounded in Newfoundland" (Howley). Local legend maintains that "about ninety years ago [c. 1867] a man named Mr. Binister came to Hare Bay." He lived in a log cabin and set rabbit snares each day. One morning when he checked his snares he found, instead of rabbits, hares. "It is said that from that time on, this area was called Hare Bay" (G.R. Collins: letter, Apr. 1979).

Noreen Saunders (1975, p. 1) confirms that local tradition maintains that the name "Hare" came from the profusion of hares in the vicinity while the name "Bay" was suggested by the size of the large, roomy harbour. Saunders (p. 1) also notes that both local legend and the unearthing of artifacts in the 1920s and 1930s suggest that Hare Bay was probably homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. A section of land on the south side of Hare Bay, known locally as "the Farm," its reputed to be the site of the graveyard. According to Paul Carignan (1977), the long, narrow reaches of central Bonavista Bay were favoured sites of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk although no archeological research had been undertaken at Hare Bay by 1982.

Sawmilling first attracted settlers to Hare Bay and by World War II the rapidly growing settlement offered plentiful employment in pit-prop cutting. Although the founding families, mainly from Greenspond and Gooseberry Islands, had brought with them a strong tradition in the

Labrador fishery, sawmilling activities quickly became the economic focus of the area led by two families, Collins and Wells, who became the major timber entrepreneurs for the many mills scattered from Traverse Brook to the north and Trinity, Bonavista Bay to the south (CG. Head: 1964, pp. 32, 99).

The first settlers, named Samuel and Thomas Collins, of Shamblers Cove, Greenspond, reputedly came to Hare Bay c. 1889, followed soon thereafter by families from Newport and Shoe Cove, Bonavista Bay. According to Head (p. 99), "the first settlement site filled most of the cove, and was composed of three gently-sloping extensions of better land that extended from the rock and bog." The growth of Hare Bay was rapid: in the 1890s, the population was composed of twenty-six people in four families, all named Collins, who were employed at Collins's sawmill or in the fishery (Saunders, p. 4; Census, 1891). The Labrador fishery continued to be reported on subsequent censuses, but as the population swelled (fifty-two in 1901, 199 in 1911, 262 in 1921), the interest in the fishery declined as the land-based forestry resource became Hare Bay's prime occupation. In 1903 Theophilus Wells, formerly of Gooseberry Island, came to Hare Bay and established a sawmill on a 16-ha (40-acre) site at nearby Lockyer's Bay in addition to building six water-powered mills. Both Collins and Wells maintained an interest in the Labrador fishery and Wells was involved in local schooners supplying Hare Bay from St. John's. Early family names in Hare Bay at this time included Roberts, Lane, Taylor and Vivian in addition to Collins and Wells.

The Labrador fishery, conducted from such ships as the Irene, Western Queen, Good Hope and the Ethel Collins (which collided with a vessel off Torbay Head, claiming the lives of four Hare Bay men), had died out by World War II and only enjoyed a brief revival in the 1950s and 1960s when it continued to be undertaken by some Newporters and former residents of Silver Fox Island, Braggs Island and Fair Islands who moved to Hare Bay between 1953 and 1961. A number of developments contributed to the resettlement of these people. The Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company had been active in Gambo since the early 1900s and many Hare Bay residents had found ready-cash employment as loggers. By 1944 the remaining inhabitants of Gooseberry Islands had moved to the mainland, mainly to Hare Bay to take up the woods and construction jobs plentiful during World War II. In 1955 Bowaters started a barking operation at Boucher's Cove on the south side of Bonavista Bay, which itself employed 100 men with the finished product being shipped to England. Until 1958, when the Bonavista North Shore Highway was completed, Hare Bay had

functioned as the roadhead of Central Bonavista Bay leading to Gambo and Glovertown, which were railway and services centres for the region. Hare Bay was a natural point of resettlement for isolated island families anxious for salaried employment and increased services.

According to Head (pp. 99-100) this influx of new residents caused problems in land division and settlement. Hare Bay, originally settled at prime locations at the two extremities, became "a continuous strip of settlement" with newer families desiring access to the sea and being compelled thus to settle on less-than-desirable locations. Hare Bay became densely settled and its formerly homogeneous population (composed of a number of related families sharing a common religious affiliation, mainly Salvation Army) became more diverse, with unrelated families of new faiths, principally Anglican and United Church, with some Pentecostals. During this period the population of Hare Bay rose from 464 in 1945 to 1,410 in 1961.

In 1961 a massive forest fire swept central and northern Bonavista Bay, destroying homes and large stands of valuable timber and with them the main source of employment in Hare Bay and other nearby communities. Hare Bay itself was twice evacuated during the course of the blaze and a total of ten homes and one service station were destroyed in the fire as was the logging industry. Although Bowaters had transferred its operations to Indian Bay in 1960, logging had remained the principal source of employment in Hare Bay. With the fire Bowaters ceased operations at Indian Bay in 1961 and the A.N.D. operations at Gambo were greatly reduced. At one stroke Hare Bay was finished as a logging town. Thereafter the population of Hare Bay slowed considerably as over sixty families left the community for jobs elsewhere, with many of them moving to Toronto. Employment for the remaining residents of Hare Bay was found in Gander, where there was still competition among Bonavista Bay inhabitants similarly affected by the fire through losses in local employment (DA: Dec. 1976). Apart from the service sector, the sole remaining source of local employment was the blueberry industry which sprang up from the devastation of the fire and the newly created barrens that had formerly been the site of large timber stands. This industry, which offered employment in August, was a ready source of cash income although the season was quite short. Pickers, both men and women, were paid by the gallon with a local merchant serving as a collector for a larger company.

Theophilus Wells constructed the first school in Hare Bay (a Salvation Army school) by 1911. Although the first census of the community, taken in

1891, showed twelve Church of England adherents and fourteen of the Methodist denomination, the Salvation Army quickly gained primacy. First brought to Hare Bay in 1899 by Samuel Collins, early followers worshipped in his store loft until the first Salvation Army citadel was built in 1906. A second citadel was constructed, under the auspices of Theophilus Wells, in the east end of Hare Bay and this building was used until a new citadel was constructed in 1945 which, though extensively renovated, continued to serve the residents in 1982.

In 1952, following the resettlement of the residents of Newport, the merchant of that community took over a shop in the central portion of Hare Bay and donated some of his land for a large, new Anglican Church and school. With the influx of settlers from Fair Islands, many of them Anglican, a larger church was built and it was consecrated on December 15, 1963. United Church residents, whose numbers also increased significantly in the 1950s, had used a school for religious services until the building of a church c. 1960 which was opened in 1961. The Pentecostal Assemblies first came to Hare Bay in 1949 and erected a church in 1950 which was replaced by a new church and pastor's residence officially opened on July 3, 1977.

Until 1952 only the Salvation Army operated a school in Hare Bay. In that year incoming residents from Braggs Island (who were mainly United Church) floated their two-room school to its new home in Hare Bay and the Anglican population, formed mainly of former Fair Islands and Silver Fox Island residents, opened a three-room school. Although the United Church school was destroyed by fire in 1954 it was completely rebuilt, and three schools, one of each denomination, operated in Hare Bay until 1974. An integrated academy, named for Hare Bay midwife Jane Collins, replaced these schools in that year.

In 1982 Hare Bay students attended Jane Collins Elementary School, Brown Memorial Junior High School (erected as a high school by the Salvation Army in 1962 and named for Colonel Chesley Brown) and Dover All-Grade School for Grades Ten and Eleven. In 1982 Hare Bay was the site of three churches, about seven retail outlets and other, smaller convenience stores. The town was served by an elected council and had a volunteer fire department. Paul Carignan (1977), George R. Collins (letter, Apr. 1978), W.B. Hamilton (1978), Handcock and Sanger (1981), C.G. Head (1964), M.F. Howley (n.d.), Noreen Saunders (1975), Census (1891-1981), DA (Dec. 1976), Sailing Directions Newfoundland (1980), Newfoundland Historical Society (Hare Bay, Bonavista Bay). Map G. JEMP