

"Divers Places": The Beothuk Indians and John Guy's Voyage into Trinity Bay in 1612

William Gilbert

Volume 6, numéro 2, fall 1990

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/nflds6_2art01

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Faculty of Arts, Memorial University

ISSN

1198-8614 (imprimé)

1715-1430 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Gilbert, W. (1990). "Divers Places": The Beothuk Indians and John Guy's Voyage into Trinity Bay in 1612. *Newfoundland Studies*, 6(2), 147–167.

“Divers Places”: The Beothuk Indians and John Guy’s Voyage into Trinity Bay in 1612

WILLIAM GILBERT

IN AUGUST, 1610, NEWFOUNDLAND’S first official colony was established at Cuperes Cove (now Cupids) in Conception Bay. The colony’s first governor was a Bristol merchant named John Guy. In the autumn of 1612 Guy and eighteen others set sail from Cupids on a voyage of discovery into Trinity Bay. Among those accompanying Guy was Henry Crout, the agent for Sir Percival Willoughby, one of the colony’s major investors. The main purpose of this voyage was to establish friendly relations with the Beothuk Indians in the hope of initiating a profitable fur trade (Cell, *Enterprise* 65-8). Until recently, the best available account of this voyage was contained in James P. Howley’s *The Beothucks or Red Indians* (1915), an account derived, Howley says, from a letter written by Guy (15). In 1957 the Lambeth Palace Library manuscript of the journal kept by Guy on his autumn voyage (from October 7 to November 25, 1612) was printed in the catalogue of the Library’s exhibition in London; it was reprinted in 1979 by D. B. Quinn (152-7), and by Gillian T. Cell in 1982 (*Newfoundland Discovered* 68-78). (The journal includes the material in Howley, but many more details are supplied.) Quinn also printed Henry Crout’s weather diaries, termed “Occurrents in Newfoundland,” kept between September 1, 1612, and April 1, 1613 (157-78); and Cell printed Crout’s letter to Sir Percival Willoughby of April 10, 1613 (*Newfoundland Discovered* 78-89) — both of which bear directly upon Guy’s expedition.

These documents, taken together, provide us with our earliest detailed description of the Trinity Bay area. But their greatest value is as a tool to the archaeologist and ethnohistorian. In them we have our first real descriptions of the Beothuk Indians — their appearance, their dress, their campsites, and so on. In all a total of eight native campsites are mentioned; some are described in considerable detail while others are simply mentioned in passing.

What follows is an attempt to retrace the route of Guy's voyage around Trinity Bay, using information contained in these documents. We are fortunate in that several of the harbors mentioned by Guy bear the same names today as they did in his time. Old Perlican, Heart's Content, Catalina, and Heart's Ease were all known to him. Yet numerous other harbors, especially in the bottom of the bay, were unknown to him and were given names by him that have long since passed into obscurity. These include such names as Savage Harbour, Alhallows, Truce Harbour, and Flagstaff Harbour. Previous commentators such as Howley, E.R. Seary, and Cell have attempted to place these names on the modern map, but another essay is in order. A number of factors have been taken into consideration in making this effort. Special attention has been paid to topography and to geological formations mentioned in the documents. In instances where direction and distance are given, these have been taken as being more or less accurate based on the assumption that, as experienced mariners, these men were well accustomed to dealing with such calculations. Factors such as the weather (i.e., if it was foggy or clear), the direction and force of the wind on a given day, and the times recorded for travelling from one place to another have all been considered. An effort has also been made to coordinate this documentary data with archaeological discoveries that have taken place in the Trinity Bay area over the past two decades. The result is a reconstruction of Guy's voyage, what was seen, and where. It is hoped that this document will serve both as an aid to the archaeologist and ethnohistorian in better understanding the nature of the Beothuk utilization of Trinity Bay and as a catalyst for future research.

Guy had originally planned his voyage for the summer of 1612. He could not, however, have foreseen the arrival of the pirate Peter Easton, who spent that summer ravaging the island's migratory fishing fleet. Thus it was not until October, after Easton had departed to attack the Spanish treasure fleet carrying its annual load of booty home from the Americas, that the governor deemed it safe to undertake the journey (Cell, *Enterprise* 67-8). The expedition set sail from Cupid's at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon of October 7, 1612 (Old Style).¹ They travelled in two small vessels. The *Indeavour*, a bark of twelve tons built at Cupids during the winter of 1610-11, carried Guy, Crout, and twelve others. She was accompanied by a shallop of perhaps five tons, containing a further five men.²

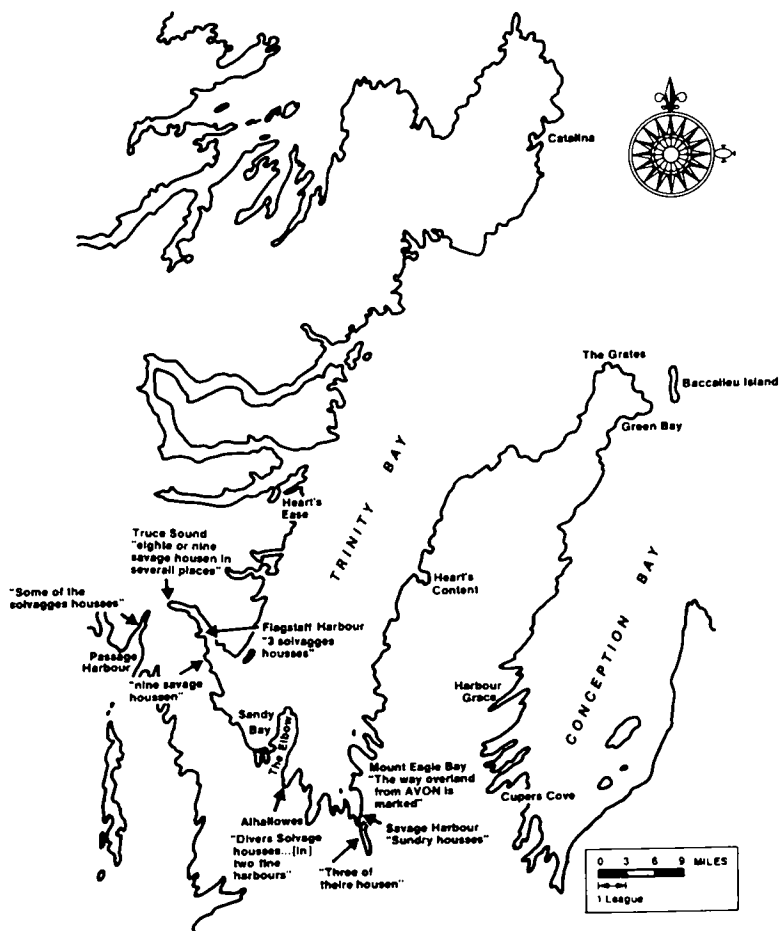
There was a light wind blowing from the west as they proceeded north "by sayling and rowing." At around 11 o'clock that night they put into Harbour Grace and anchored just off from "the Pirates forte" built there by Easton. Here they spent the next nine days salvaging salt from a 120-ton French bank ship that the pirates had stripped and left at anchor. No doubt the shallop was kept busy during this time ferrying loads of salt from ship to shore, where it was piled "vpon the higheste parte of the grownd thereabouts." This accomplished, at "abowte 7 of the clocke" on the morning of October 17, they departed for Green Bay (Bay de Verde), arriving there "aboute the settinge of the sune." Here they rested for several hours.

The next day, October 18, was to prove an exhausting one. The governor must have been anxious to get on with the expedition after the long delay at Harbour Grace. Whatever the reason, at about 2 o'clock the next morning, with a strong wind blowing from the northwest and occasional showers of snow, they set sail in an effort to "double the Grates" (i.e., sail around Grates Point) into Trinity Bay. The whole of that day was spent as Crout says, "bounding too and froo," trying to beat to windward into the bay. At some point the little shallop slipped past Grates Point and disappeared. The *Indeavour*, however, finally had to abandon the attempt and put once more, "late at night," into Bay de Verde.

It snowed heavily most of that night but the sky had cleared by dawn and it was a bright fall morning when the bark again weighed anchor. The wind was still blowing "a stiffe gale" from the northwest and all that morning was spent tacking back and forth. In the afternoon the wind shifted more to the west and carried the vessel to "S. Catalinaes" on the north side of Trinity Bay. There can be little doubt that this was present day Catalina. Guy states that it "lyeth from Baccaleau [Island] NNW," and we know that this harbor had been known to mariners by some variant of its present name since the early 16th century.³ A gale continued to blow from the west for the next forty-eight hours and so the vessel remained anchored in the lee of an Island — the crew unable to go ashore without the shallop, which served, among other things, as a landing vessel. Finally, on the afternoon of October 21, the wind changed around to the north and by four o'clock the *Indeavour* set sail to get further up into Trinity Bay.

They sailed all night — "our course," Guy says, "was sw and swbs moste commonlie" — and by daylight the next morning they found themselves "about two leagues [six miles] farther up [south] in the bay then Hartes Content." Continuing south, that afternoon they dropped anchor in a harbor which they termed Mount Eagle Bay. Gillian Cell suggests that this harbor was present day Hopeall, and certainly the evidence supports this. Crout states that Heart's Content is "some 8 leages from Mount Eagle Bay," which corresponds almost exactly with the distance by boat between the two harbors. Also, both Guy and Crout agree that there was, in Crout's words, "a fine

little lland which was [has?] excellent good ground and grasse upon it" at the harbor's mouth, and the only harbor in the area that fits this description is Hopeall. The name itself was probably inspired by the high headland on the harbor's south side. Known today as Hopeall Head, it is still a nesting place for bald eagles. Here the *Indeavour* was joined by the shallop whose crew, it was discovered, had spent the preceding three days at Heart's Content.



The next day was spent in the shallop exploring the harbor. Even at this early date, overland trips between Conception Bay and Trinity Bay must have been taking place, for Guy states that at Mount Eagle Bay there was

marked a "way overland from Avon in the bay of Conception." The little island was also examined and found to be rich in scurvy grass (or sorrel), which they gathered. Crout mentions that the Island had obviously at one time been frequented by "great store of birdes."

The sun was shining brightly and there was a slight breeze from the southeast as the two vessels departed Mount Eagle Bay on the morning of October 24. A cable had been stretched between them and they proceeded south, "rowing all the day," with the shallop towing the bark. Sometime between 3 and 4 o'clock that afternoon they entered "a harbour in the South bottome of Trinitie bay." Cell has suggested that this harbor was Dildo Arm, and again this must be correct. Crout tells us that "Right off[f] the north [i.e., starboard] side before the harbours mouth [were] 3 fine Islands," and that they proceeded south into the harbor "some 4 mylles." Dildo Arm, lying at the bottom of Trinity Bay, has three islands at its entrance and the distance from the first to the bottom of the arm is just over four miles. Here they dropped anchor for the night.

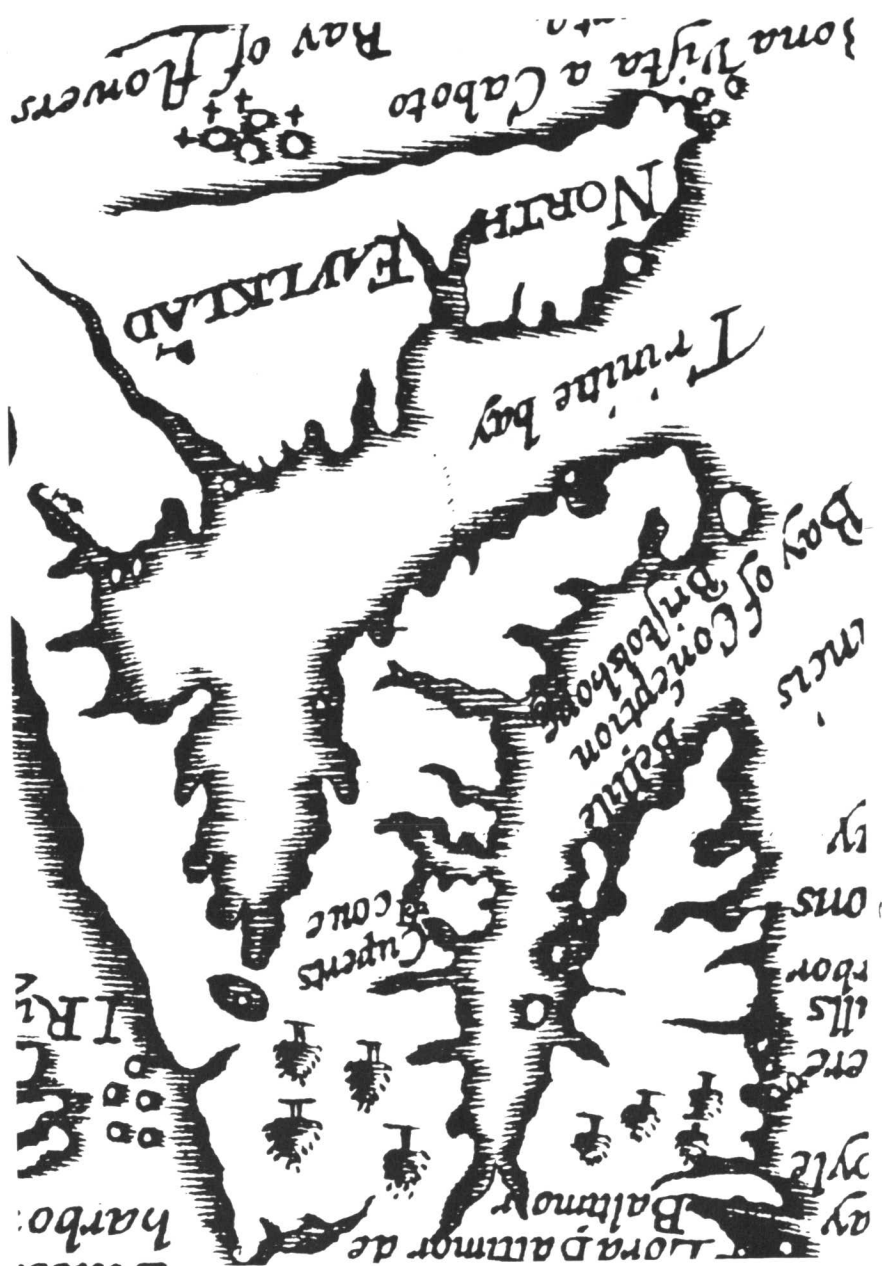
October 25, Crout says, was mild with bright sunshine interspersed by occasional showers. The day was spent exploring the harbor in the shallop and it was here, in what Guy called Savage Harbour, that the explorers saw their first Indian encampment. Several Indian "houses" were found — no specific number is given — and a number of articles used by the Beothuk, including a shield, one or more spears, an arrow, and various containers made of bark. They also saw a "great path thorowe the woodes." This is as detailed a description as we have of what was found at Dildo Arm that day and is as much as we ever would have known had it not been for the westerly wind that blew so strong the next morning.

On the morning of October 26, with the sun shining brightly, Guy and his men made ready to leave Savage Harbour for the north side of Trinity Bay. A cable was again secured between the bark and the shallop, and the shallop was rowed, towing the bark, to the harbor's mouth. The sails were hoisted but a strong wind blowing from the west made it impossible to get underway. Crout says that "finding the wind contrarie we returned backe againe and did anker in the same place from whence we parted." Once anchored, it was decided to send a party to explore "the path of the solvages [i.e., savages]." Within an hour the party returned with the news that the path led to "a great freshe water lake." Two fires had been seen: one on the side of the lake, and the other upon an island in the lake. Guy decided to go there and attempt to contact the Indians he was sure were responsible for these fires.

If we accept that Guy was anchored in the bottom of Dildo Arm, then the lake both he and Crout describe has to be Dildo Pond, a large fresh water lake one mile south of, and emptying into, Dildo Arm. Guy states that "The lake is about a mile from any parte of the harborough," and that from it



John Mason's map of Newfoundland includes a scale in English leagues.



Detail from John Mason's map showing a large lake with an island, south of Dildo Arm in Trinity Bay.

flowed "a very great brooke" with enough force to drive three forges. (Of significance too is Captain John Mason's map of Newfoundland published in 1625. In 1615 Mason succeeded Guy as governor. Much of his time on the island was spent exploring and charting the coastline (Cell, *Enterprise* 73, 83-4). His map shows a large lake with an island at the bottom of Trinity Bay, just south of Dildo Arm. This lake, undoubtedly meant to represent Dildo Pond, is the only inland body of water on the map.)

That evening Guy and fourteen others followed the trail and came to the side of the lake at twilight. The fires were still burning and a canoe with two Indians was seen going towards the island. Guy's party stopped within half a mile of the fire on the shore and waited for two hours. Then, in darkness, they proceeded.

The Indians had taken shelter on the island but three of their houses, two of which "had bin latelie vsed," were found at the place where the fire burnt. These structures Guy describes as being "but [poles] set in a round forme, meeting all together alofte." They were "about tenne foote broad," with hearths in the middle. Two of the structures were covered in caribou skin and the third was "covered with a [sail], which they had gotten from some christian." The hearth in one of the structures had been recently used and was still hot. Among the things seen in and around the houses Guy lists: "a cooper kettle kepte very brighte," a fur gown, some seal skins, an old sail, and a fishing reel. "This time of the yeare," Guy says, "they live by hunting," and he mentions seeing the hooves of three caribou "latlie killed" and some beaver flesh.

As a sign that they had been there, these items were taken and "laid orderlie one upon the other" in one of the houses, with the copper kettle hung above the rest. Guy and Crout differ somewhat over what happened next. Guy says that nothing was taken but that they left in the kettle some biscuit and three or four amber beads, "to beginne to [win] them by [fair] meanes." Crout says that they took two or three children's shoes and left some biscuit, some "pointtes,"⁴ and some bracelets. This done, they returned by moonlight along the side of the lake to the path's entrance. Just before they reached the entrance, they saw "a new savadge house almoste finished, which was made in a square forme with a small rooffe."

Three days more were spent by Guy at "Savage Harbour," but of what took place during that time almost nothing is known. Guy states that "The nexte day [October 27] we put forth a flag of truce being a white flag." Whether he means by this that they returned to the lake carrying a white flag, or that they set up a white flag somewhere in the harbor, or that they simply hoisted a white flag from the bark, we cannot say. In his entry for that day he goes on to talk about the river that flows from the lake. He also talks about shoes made of caribou and seal skin that he saw "at theire cabanes" and describes the two types of oars used by the Indians. The general

impression one gets is that they returned to the lake the next day for a better look, carrying a flag of truce; but again we can't be certain. Nor do we know why they stayed for so long at Savage Harbour. On both the 28th and 29th, favorable winds were blowing from the southeast. Perhaps they remained there in the hope of meeting and trading with the Indians. That was, after all, the main reason for the voyage.

Finally, on the morning of October 30, "without any further business with the [savages]," they took their leave of Savage Harbour. They did not get very far that day. A light breeze was blowing from the southeast, and Crout states that there was "thick fog." Indeed, the bark probably went no further than the mouth of Dildo Arm that morning. The shallop was sent off exploring to the north and west but, owing to fog, and "fearinge to louse the sight of our penice [i.e. the bark]," went no further than a league in that direction. A league to the northwest of Dildo Arm would have taken the shallop to the mouth of Chapel Arm harbor. Crout states that the shallop entered another harbor and that William Hatton, one of the crew members, there "had the sight of some Irone Stone in the point of a rock: but by no maynes could go ashooore the sea [being] so loftie."

The predominant types of stone found throughout this area are grey to black shale and olive green sandstone, part of the Musgrave Harbour Group. The one exception to this is a bed of red, pink, and green shale which can be seen at intervals along the coast from Spread Eagle west as far as Chapel Arm. Part of the Adeyton Group, it stands out in striking contrast to the surrounding material (King and Paltanavage). The most outstanding example of this is Chapel Head on the north side of Chapel Arm harbor. Here alternating bands of red and green shale run diagonally across the sheer face of the headland. It may well be Chapel Head that Hatton saw; if not the head itself, it was undoubtedly an outcropping of this red shale somewhere between Chapel Arm and Spread Eagle.

The shallop returned to the bark and in the afternoon the fog lifted. Still there was not enough wind to get under sail, and the shallop had to be used again to tow the larger vessel "over for the north side of Trinitie." Crout reports spending the night "ankered under a pointte of an island."

On October 24, travelling in the same fashion, it had taken most of the day to cover the ten miles from the bottom of Hopeall harbor to the bottom of Dildo Arm. Assuming that they were underway by about 7 a.m., and that they dropped anchor at, as Crout says, "about 3 or 4 of the clock" on the 24th, they covered about ten miles in eight hours. That's an average speed of 1.25 miles per hour. If we assume their rate of progress to have been about the same on the afternoon of October 30, and allow for five hours of rowing before dark, then the maximum distance they could have covered was 6.25 miles. The only island in this area is Hopeall Island, and had they returned to that island it is likely that either Crout or Guy would have said

so. The only other islands in the general neighborhood are the three islands in the mouth of Dildo Arm. It must therefore have been off one of these, probably Big Dildo Island, the largest of the three with a point of land extending to the south, that they anchored. As we shall see, if we assume that they anchored here then the remainder of the narrative makes perfect sense.

The next morning, October 31, they again weighed anchor. It was a fine day with a wind from the southwest. According to Crout, they travelled "west and west north west from [the] island some two leagues" and about "ten of the clock rowing along came to a fine sound." If we were to follow the same course today, we would find ourselves at the entrance to Collier Bay, a deep harbor on the Isthmus of Avalon. Guy tells us that this harbor "hath [adjoining] unto yt very high land." That afternoon Guy and five companions climbed to the top of this "high land" and caught their first glimpse of Placentia Bay which, he says, "was to the neereste place about three leagues over land." Apparently Guy held out hopes of finding a navigable passage from Trinity into Placentia Bay. Crout tells us that by making this climb the governor thought "to discover some passagg thorowe some soundes into the Bay of Pleasaunce." The highest hills in the area lie at the bottom of Collier Bay on its eastern side. The hills rise to 600 feet above sea level, and on a clear day one can see Placentia Bay about nine miles to the west. Guy named this harbor Alhallows after the day upon which they had arrived — All-hallow Eve. Here they spent the night, "Some of our people," Crout says, "Lying ashore and some aboard."

The next morning, November 1, there was a high wind blowing from the southeast and rain. Sometime after 8 o'clock the two vessels weighed anchor and got underway in an effort to get around the headland which they called the Elbow. The weather proved too rough for the bark and she "returned back againe unto the place we removed anker this morning." The shallop, however, managed to clear the headland and enter the next bay.

Unable to go ashore because of "soe greate a sea," the tiny vessel returned. The crew informed Guy that they had seen there "a sandie banke for a league of grey colour." They also reported that the harbor was extremely shoal, and that a sounding taken about a league from the sand bank showed only four fathoms of water. They named the place Sandy Bay. This must be Tickle Bay, to the west of Collier Bay on the other side of the Bellevue Peninsula. The "sandie bank" is now called Bellevue Beach, a long tombolo beach that lies at the bottom of the bay. The Elbow is, of course, the Bellevue Peninsula. Tickle Bay, as anyone who has attempted to bring even a small boat through at low tide will attest, is extremely shallow.

On November 2, westerly wind and rain forced the bark to remain anchored at Alhallows. Once more the shallop was put to use exploring the surrounding area. Crout reports finding, in the same bay where the bark was

anchored, "2 fine harbours more not [about each] a mille of anuder," and that "in thes places we [saw] divers solvages housses: but not that they had bin ther in [a] long tyme."

So, somewhere in Collier Bay lie two harbors, about a mile apart, where once stood a number of abandoned Indian structures. Where were these harbors? The best harbor in Collier Bay is Thornlea Harbour on the western side of the bay. If we assume, as seems likely, that the bark was anchored in the bottom of the bay, then Thornlea must surely be one of Crout's "fine harbours." North of Thornlea there are only steep cliffs to the sea and the same is true of the eastern side of the bay. However, between the bottom of the bay and Thornlea are two other harbors, one of which lies less than a mile to the south of Thornlea. Thornlea is particularly attractive in that it provides easy access to both Collier and Tickle bays. It lies only two miles overland from Tickle Bay, and most of this distance could be easily traversed in canoe by going from one small body of water to the next.

By the next morning, November 3, a strong southwest wind had arisen, and so with "clear and sune shininge weather" the vessels weighed anchor and hoisted their sails. Guy tells us that they sailed "northwards towards a sound," which they entered, and anchored in a harbor on the sound's western side. The distance between this harbor and Alhallows was seven leagues. Along the way they sighted another harbor "that hath before the entrance a good space of two rocks." While the bark proceeded up the arm, the shallop was sent in to explore this other harbor and found there "nine savage [houses] used by them in their coasting." This other harbor was also located within the sound at a point where the sound "is about two miles broad." The shallop then proceeded on and joined the bark in the second harbor. There, Crout tells us, they, "stayed all night supping ashooore." He also mentions that "ther we found allso 3 solvaggess housses more."

Taking Guy at his word and following this course from the bottom of Collier Bay around the Bellevue Peninsula and north along the coast for a total of seven leagues (or twenty-one miles), we find ourselves roughly three miles up Bull Arm at Great Mosquito Cove. Prior to reaching Great Mosquito, just within the entrance of the Arm, we pass the two Shag Islands and, a little further along at the point where the Arm narrows to about two miles, we come to Stock Cove.

On November 4, they continued up the sound, "Thinking sure," Crout says, "to have found a passag thorowe." They did not find such a passage. In his entry for that day Guy tells us that the sound consisted of three reaches: "the firste reach lieth *n̄w* westerlie one league, from thence *n̄w* half a league and from thence *w̄w* one league, wheare the Sound did end." Here, at the bottom of the sound, they found: a canoe containing a fishing line and a fisherman's cape hauled up on the beach; a place where a bear's skin had been tanned; "eighte or nine savage housen in severall places, and a way

cut into the woodes." The entrance to this way (or path), Crout tells us, was next to a little island; this was described by Guy as being "about five acres of ground which is joined to the maine with a small beach." Here they had their dinner. In the afternoon nine of the men, including Crout, set off to explore the "way," which was found "to lead directlie to a harborough in the bay of Placentia distant onlie two miles w." Over this way, Crout says, the Indians carried their canoes "to Imbark them selves at the other side." A river flowed into the Placentia Bay harbor from the northeast. According to Crout, several more Indian houses were found near that river. Close by the houses were found a basket full of fish hooks, a fishing line and a lead, a caulking iron, a "target", a staff, "flentt stones"(probably chert for making stone tools), some skins, and a small copper kettle. Crout also mentions seeing "2 very great wollves." This harbor they called Passage Harbour.

The fact that the distance overland from the bottom of the sound to Placentia Bay was only two miles proves conclusively that the sound is present day Bull Arm. Located on the eastern side of the Isthmus of Avalon in Trinity Bay, it lies only two miles overland from Placentia Bay. Passage Harbour is, of course, present day Come By Chance. The little island which Crout said was "in the verie Trad way of the [Indians] as they go into Pleasence" can be none other than Frenchmen's Island.

Guy still entertained the hope of finding a waterway leading into Placentia Bay. Crout says that the governor now believed this might exist further north in the area of Heart's Ease. With this in mind, the next day he led a party of men overland across the river that flowed into Passage Harbour and up a "very high hill." The highest hill in the area is the one now known as the Powderhorn, lying roughly three miles to the northwest of Bull Arm across the Come By Chance River. It is most likely up the side of this peak that Guy led his men. The bay was shrouded in fog most of that day and they decided to remain on the hill for the night. About sunset the fog lifted and Placentia Bay was revealed, spread out below them to the south and west. The western side of the bay could be seen stretching away to the southwest and Guy had to conclude "that Passage Harbour . . . is in the bottome of the bay of Placentia." The Avalon was, indeed, a peninsula, not an island.

Around noon the next day (November 6) Guy and his party returned to Bull Arm. They lit a fire on the beach and after dinner, at "about two of the clocke," sighted a fire that the Indians had started a mile or two out the arm.⁵ This, Crout says, "was taken as a sign for us to come unto them." Boarding both vessels, they sailed towards the fire. The Indians had built a structure covered with a sail — Guy calls it a "tilte" — at the place where the fire burnt. Next to this was a number of poles from which they had hung furs, "of beaver moste," and some chains made of shell. It was

here that the long awaited meeting between the colonists and the Indians took place (and which, of course, is described in Howley's book).

There were eight Beothuk in two canoes and one of them walked along the beach toward the colonists carrying a flag of white wolf skin and "making a [loud noise], which we took to be for a parlie." The Indians were extremely cautious at first and, when they saw both the bark and the shallop coming toward them, took to their canoes and began to flee. Seeing this, the men in the bark dropped anchor and a white flag was hoisted. Then the shallop was rowed ashore and landed Master George Whittington, who approached them carrying a flag of truce. There followed a series of negotiations which involved singing, dancing, and an exchange of gifts. The Indians presented the whites with, among other things, several arrows without heads. Among the gifts the whites presented to the Indians were a small piece of brass, a knife, a linen cap, a hand towel, a shirt, two table napkins and a dozen "pointes." Gradually a few more of each party were allowed to land until six of the whites, including Guy and Crout, and six or more of the Indians were together on the shore. Food was brought, and the Indians and the colonists shared a meal. The colonists contributed bread, butter, raisins, beer, and aquavit. The Indians contributed caribou meat which had been either dried or smoked. Crout said that the Indians did not care for the beer, but the aquavit "did like them well." Finally, as darkness approached, the Beothuk signalled that it was time to leave. Prior to leaving, the Indians exchanged their wolfskin flag for the colonist's flag of truce. Then both parties departed, Guy and his men returning to the bottom of the Sound which they now called Truce Sound because, as Crout tells us, "We made truce with them ther."

Guy and his men were obviously pleased with this encounter and saw in it the beginnings of what they hoped would be a lucrative, long-term trade. In keeping with this, the next day (November 7) they began building a house on Frenchmen's Island which was intended to serve as a trading post during further expeditions. "For any bartering with the savages," Guy says, "there cannot be a fitter place." They also seem to have hoped to meet with the Indians again before they took their leave. That night, however, it froze hard and on the morning of the 8th the bottom of the Sound was covered in ice. Fearing that they might be frozen in, and having seen no more of the Indians, they weighed anchor and departed. With them, pulled by the shallop, they took the canoe that they had found there. (There is a picture of a Beothuk canoe in Guy's journal; it is reproduced in Neary and O'Flaherty 28.)

On their way out of the sound they came to the place where the meeting had occurred two days earlier; and seeing, Guy says, "all things remayning there, as it was when we parted," they went ashore. They now realized that the furs had been displayed for the purpose of trade. By this time, however, the party was running short of trade goods and so they took only three skins

— “a beaver skinne, a saple skinne, and a bird skinne” — and left for the Beothuk an axe, a knife, and four threaded needles. Master Whittington, of his own accord, took a small beaver skin and left a pair of scissors.

In the afternoon they dropped anchor once more in Great Mosquito Cove. Crout states that they anchored again in that harbor coming into Truce Sound where they had previously been anchored on November 4. It must have been to this place that the Beothuk had retreated on the night after the meeting, for the colonists found there the discarded flag pole to which their flag of truce had been attached. As a result, they named the cove Flagstaff Harbour. Here they stayed until November 10, perhaps hoping to meet again with the Indians. Certainly the weather was favorable during all that time, with a good wind blowing from the northwest. Finally, on the morning of the 10th, with the wind still strong from the northwest, they departed from Flagstaff Harbour and, with the shallop still towing the canoe, came to anchor that night at Heart's Content. Two days later they set sail on what would prove to be a long and eventful journey back to Conception Bay.

Both Guy and Crout bear witness to a considerable Beothuk presence in that part of Trinity Bay between Dildo Arm and Bull Arm in the autumn of 1612. While not all the areas mentioned in these documents have been looked at by archaeologists, the data from those that have been examined both confirms the reports made by these early explorers and indicates that what Guy and Crout saw was perhaps the final chapter in a story of aboriginal utilization extending back for thousands of years.⁶

The first archaeological investigation to touch upon the area was a survey of Placentia Bay conducted by Urve Linnamae in 1970. She reports finding patinated flakes (stone fragments produced during the manufacture of stone tools) of undetermined cultural affinity on the eastern side of a sand beach located at the mouth of the Come By Chance River — Guy's Passage Harbour. While these flakes may not be of Beothuk or Recent Indian origin, they at least point to an aboriginal presence in the area.

In August, 1978, a survey of the north side of Trinity Bay between Cape Bonavista and Bull Arm was undertaken by Gerald Penney. This resulted in the location of significant sites at both Frenchmen's Island and Stock Cove.

As we have seen, Frenchmen's Island is located at the bottom of Bull Arm — or Truce Sound, as Guy called it — and lay “in the verie trad way” used by the Beothuk travelling from Trinity Bay into Placentia Bay. As a result, Guy chose it as the location of his trading post. Excavations conducted here by Clifford Evans identified three cultural components: Dorset Eskimo, Recent Indian, and mid-17th-century European (“1980 Field Report” 88-94; also “Frenchmen's Island Site” 210-25). An analysis of the Indian lithics from the site, conducted by Schwarz, suggests a long-term occupation, extending from perhaps as early as the 8th century A.D. until the 16th century

A.D. The variety of artifact types, resource availability, and site location led Schwarz to the conclusion that the site constituted a coastal base camp, located on the coast but with easy access to the interior (39-40, 64). While the documents do not state specifically that there was an Indian encampment on the Island — and there may well not have been by the time of Guy's arrival — they certainly indicate a strong Indian presence in the surrounding area. The mid-17th-century material may point to an initial period of European utilization following the Beothuk abandonment.

In 1981 Douglas Robbins undertook an excavation of the Stock Cove site, where Guy claims there were nine houses. The site contained material of Maritime Archaic, Groswater Eskimo, Dorset Eskimo, and Recent Indian origin. While Robbins' work concentrated on the site's Dorset component, the Recent Indian material was so plentiful that he suggested the site "May prove to be one of the larger Recent Indian occupations on the Island" ("Stock Cove" 51-2). In a number of cases Indian artifacts were found in association with European material, leading Robbins to the conclusion that "Part, at least, of this Recent Indian occupation seems to have occurred during the historic period" ("Preliminary Report" 199). An analysis of the Indian material from this site, also conducted by Schwarz, indicates that the Indian occupation covered roughly the same period as Frenchmen's Island — the 8th century A.D. to the 16th century A.D. However, unlike Frenchmen's Island, Stock Cove was more likely a "special exploitation camp," probably used to hunt non-migratory seal species such as harbor and grey seals (Schwarz 41-2, 64).

A survey of Dildo Pond, conducted in 1988 by Gilbert and Reynolds, located a Beothuk site on a low grassy point on the western side of the lake. Test pitting in the area produced numerous flakes, firecracked rocks, charcoal, and evidence of stratigraphy. One test pit produced an historic Beothuk projectile point. A visual search of the area produced more flakes and a triangular biface of black chert also typical of the historic Beothuk period. No proper excavations have yet been conducted at the site; however, documentary and archaeological evidence indicates that this is the same site described by Guy and Crout as being on a great fresh water lake at the bottom of Trinity Bay (Gilbert and Reynolds 6-9).

While little can be said about a site where no excavation has taken place, the location combined with the documentary evidence suggests that one reason for its existence was as a camp for exploiting caribou during the fall migration. We know that until the 18th century the range of the Avalon caribou extended as far north as the Bay de Verde Peninsula (Mercer *et al.* 23). Biologists suggest that during the late fall caribou on the peninsula would have migrated south towards the more hospitable area around Placentia and St. Mary's bays. Some caribou may have begun to migrate as early as the latter part of October, but the migration would probably have gotten under way in earnest in

December.⁷ This is confirmed by the documents. Both Guy and Crout report seeing large numbers of caribou in the Bay de Verde area in mid-November. Yet a hunting party sent there during the second half of December returned empty-handed (Quinn 166-7). It seems likely that what Guy and his party witnessed at Dildo Pond was the Beothuk making ready for this fall migration. The pond may have been an ideal place to intercept the herd. Guy mentions seeing caribou hooves at the site, and the Indians at Truce Sound were carrying caribou meat. It is also possible that the square structure "almoste finished," seen by Guy at Dildo Pond, was a store house being constructed to hold the soon to be acquired meat.

In 1989 Callum Thomson conducted a survey of Great Mosquito Cove. Here, at Sampson's Head Cove, a tiny cove on the south side of the harbor close to its entrance, a small multi-component site containing Maritime Archaic, Groswater Eskimo, Dorset Eskimo, and early Recent Indian material was found.⁸ While it produced no evidence of an historic Beothuk occupation, it attests to an aboriginal presence dating back thousands of years and in no way precludes the possibility that Beothuk material may yet be found. Certainly, the documentary evidence points to the likelihood of such a find being made.

It has been commonly held that the Beothuk presence in Trinity Bay was, at best, a minimal one and probably consisted of occasional forays into the area from farther north (Rowe 16-17). However, the evidence now emerging from both historical and archaeological sources points to a much more extensive utilization of the area than had previously been believed. We will never know for certain how many structures were seen during the Guy expedition. In some cases the documents give specific numbers, while in others terms such as "divers," "sundry," and "several" are used. Still, if we assume that each of these terms implies the existence of at least three structures, we are left with an estimate of thirty-six structures along the roughly thirty-mile stretch of coastline between Dildo Arm and Bull Arm. Of course, not all of these sites would have been utilized at any one time. Rather, occupation would have shifted from one area to another, following the availability of resources. We know too that one area, Alhallows, was abandoned for some time — although whether this means several months or several years is anyone's guess at present. Still, the general impression is one of extensive utilization of the area over an extended period of time.

The most obvious fact about all these sites is that they are located either on or very near the Isthmus of Avalon. The attractiveness of the isthmus for aboriginal peoples has been ably described by Robbins in his thesis on the Dorset occupation of Stock Cove. The close proximity of both marine and terrestrial resources — harbor seals and caribou being the major two, supplemented by a variety of other minor ones — and the easy access to the resource bases of both Trinity and Placentia bays, must have attracted native

peoples since the earliest times. In the case of the Dorset, these conditions seem to have resulted in less mobility than elsewhere on the Island, where these resources would have been more disbursed, and may have encouraged a more fixed pattern of settlement (Robbins, "Stock Cove" 135-6).

It now appears that these conditions were still being taken advantage of by the Beothuk as late as the second decade of the 17th century. Indeed, the evidence suggests the existence of a Beothuk band in whose seasonal round the isthmus played a major role. Sir David Kirke was aware of this band's existence. Writing in 1640, he states that the bottom of Trinity Bay was "a place always frequented with the natives" (Howley 23). No doubt one component of their seasonal round would have been the exploitation of harbor and grey seals, at places such as Stock Cove, from late spring until fall. Another would have been the hunting of caribou during their late fall migration at places such as Dildo Pond. The Bull Arm-Come By Chance area served as a passage between Trinity and Placentia bays and seems to have acted as a base camp for monitoring the resources of both bays. From here forays farther out the bays may have been launched.

The evidence indicates a Beothuk presence in these areas. Crout states that the Beothuk were known to sometimes travel as far north as Green Bay (Bay de Verde) hunting caribou. Richard Whitbourne, writing in 1619, describes encountering Indians involved in hunting birds and collecting their eggs near Heart's Ease (Cell, *Newfoundland Discovered* 193-4). The Welshman Rice Jones encountered Beothuk while fishing somewhere on the western side of Placentia Bay in the summer of 1594 (Howley 13). In the last century, two Beothuk burials were located on the Ragged Islands in Placentia Bay (Howley 292-3). Finally, in 1970 Linnamae located two Little Passage (prehistoric Beothuk) sites on the islands in Placentia Bay.⁹

While there was much on the isthmus to attract a group of aboriginal hunter-gatherers, there was little to attract migratory fishermen. Guy was familiar with the topography and nomenclature of Trinity Bay as far south as Heart's Content on the south shore and Heart's Ease on the north shore, but seems to have been almost totally unfamiliar with the bay south of these places. This seems to reflect the general European knowledge of the area at the time. If we look at C. Grant Head's map of inshore cod resources for the period 1766-73, we see that in Trinity Bay the distribution of these resources corresponds almost exactly with Guy's knowledge of placenames (24). That is, they were concentrated north of Heart's Content on the south shore and north of Random Sound on the north shore. In Placentia Bay these resources were concentrated to the south of Placentia on the eastern side of the bay and to the south of Paradise Sound on the western side of the bay. The establishment of small year-round settlements during the second half of the 17th century reflects this pattern. These settlements were invariably confined to the outer reaches of the bays where inshore cod stocks — the

only reason for the existence of the settlements — were easily accessible. Still, the establishment of the settlements would have led to an increasing utilization of the bottoms of the bays as a source of furs, game, and lumber.¹⁰

While the absence of Europeans in the bottom of Trinity and Placentia bays facilitated the Beothuk utilization of the area, the presence of large numbers of migratory fishermen farther out in the bays for a certain part of each year may have, for a time, enhanced the attraction of the isthmus for the Beothuk. Guy and Crout make it clear that the Indians they encountered had access to a wide variety of European goods. When we consider that by this time the waters around Newfoundland had been frequented by fishermen for over 100 years, this should come as no surprise. Whether these goods were acquired as a result of theft or trade, we cannot say. However, it was most likely a combination of the two.

There are a number of instances of hostile encounters between Europeans and Beothuk in the area. The encounters mentioned by both Whitbourne and Jones were hostile in nature: the first involved a Beothuk raid on a Devonshire fishing vessel; in the second, Jones' boats were cut loose by the Indians and he was forced to leave for Ferryland. In 1640 David Kirke writes bemoaning the fate of the fishermen "in Trinity Bay and more northerly . . . [who] have found too many bad neighbours of the natives almost every fishing season" (Howley 23).

Yet it is obvious that the Beothuk were familiar with some form of trade. They may have been, as some have suggested, trading with the French, Basque, and Breton fishermen farther out in Placentia Bay (Cell, *Enterprise* 68). Certainly, many aspects of the encounter between the Indians and Guy's company suggest the outline of a formal ceremony. The lighting of a fire as a signal to approach, the familiarity of the Indians with a white flag as a symbol of truce, the presentation of an arrow without a head — obviously another sign of peace — and the displaying of various furs and chains of shells on stakes all point to this. The Indians also seem to have been aware of the white man's fondness for beaver pelts. One might even argue that the Indians' ready acceptance of strong liquor suggests a familiarity with the ways of the white man. In fact, the Indians appear to have been far more familiar with the nuances of this form of trade than were Guy's men. We have seen that the colonists did not at first realize why the furs had been displayed. Crout tells us that they were originally under the impression that the pelts had been put out to dry.

The above account, while it answers some questions, raises a great many more. We are extremely fortunate to have as much documentation as we do for this area at such an early period. However, barring the discovery of some as yet unknown document buried away in a distant archive, we are unlikely to discover much more about the events and places here described through

historical research. Perhaps the only thing that will help us find more answers is more archaeology.

Savage Harbour (Dildo Arm) and Alhallowes (Collier Bay) have yet to be examined. Given the encouraging results from those areas that have been looked at, both hold out great promise. Other areas such as Truce Sound (Bull Arm) and Passage Harbour (Come By Chance) certainly warrant further investigation. Guy's description of the former suggests more than one site in the area; while the location of Crout's "housses" at the latter remains a mystery. Other harbors in the area not visited by Guy also hold promise. When we consider that almost every harbor visited by the colonists along that stretch of coast produced evidence of an Indian presence, and that they investigated less than half of these harbors, chances are that other sites were completely bypassed. Thus places like Spread Eagle Bay, Long Cove, Chance Cove, and Rantem Cove are worthy of attention.

Survey work has its value but serves little purpose unless followed up by excavation. A small fraction of Stock Cove's Beothuk component was sampled and that site is certainly worthy of further analysis. The Dildo Pond site was only recently discovered and holds out great promise. It is also obvious from this discussion that other significant sites may yet await discovery.

Notes

¹The Gregorian Calendar was not adopted in Britain until 1752. Prior to this the Old Style or Julian Calendar was used. The dates in the documents examined here vary from our own calendar by 13 days. Thus, Guy's October 7 is our October 20.

²For a description of these vessel types see Baker.

³Morison 346. Jacques Cartier spent ten days at Catalina Harbour during his first voyage to the New World in 1534.

⁴We may never know for certain what Guy and Crout meant by "pointtes." However, perhaps the most likely definition from the *OED* is "a pointed weapon or instrument for stabbing or piercing." Cell suggests "nails or spikes" but the word might as easily have been used of any sharp metal object, perhaps even metal arrow heads.

⁵In their journals both Guy and Crout agree that the distance was a mile. However, in his letter to Willoughby, Crout states that the distance was "some two miles."

⁶The following chronology will be of assistance to those unfamiliar with Newfoundland prehistory:

Maritime Archaic Indians (3000 B.C.-1200 B.C.)

Groswater Eskimo (600 B.C.-100 B.C.)

Dorset Eskimo (100 A.D.-700 A.D.)

Recent Indian (200 A.D.-1828?). Most authorities now agree that this last group is the precursor of those Indians known to us as Beothuk.

⁷Ken Curnew, personal communication, February, 1990.

⁸Callum Thomson, personal communication, January, 1990.

⁹Linnaeae 10-14. While Linnaeae was uncertain about the cultural affinity of these artifacts, a comparison of the photographs of the artifacts with Schwarz's chronology (64) indicates that they are Little Passage.

¹⁰Handcock 41; and Proulx 12. French settlement in Placentia Bay began officially in 1662. The origin of English settlement in Trinity Bay is harder to pin down but settlements were established in the outer reaches of the bay by at least 1675.

References

- Baker, William A. *Colonial Vessels: Some Seventeenth Century Sailing Craft*. Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishing Co., 1962.
- Cell, Gillian. *English Enterprise in Newfoundland, 1577-1660*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969.
- . *Newfoundland Discovered: English Attempts at Colonization, 1610-1630*. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1981.
- Evans, Clifford O. "1980 Field Report of Frenchmen's Island Project." In Jane Sproull Thomson and Bernard Ransom, eds. *Archaeology in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1980*. St. John's: Historic Resources Division, Dept. of Culture, Recreation, and Youth, Govt. of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1981, 88-94.
- . "Frenchmen's Island Site, Preliminary Field Report." In Jane Sproull Thomson and Callum Thomson, eds. *Archaeology in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1981*. St. John's: Historic Resources Division, Dept. of Culture, Recreation, and Youth, Govt. of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1982, 210-25.
- Gilbert, William, and Ken Reynolds. "Report of an Archaeological Survey: Come By Chance River and Dildo Pond." ms, Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, 1989.
- Handcock, W. Gordon. *So long as there comes no women. Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland*. St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1989.
- Head, C. Grant. *Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland: A Geographer's Perspective*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1976.
- Howley, James P. *The Beothucks or Red Indians: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1915.
- King, A. F., and T. Paltanavage. "Geology of the Avalon Peninsula (Parts of 1K, 1L, 1M, 1N, and 2C)." Map 88-01, Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Govt. of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1988.
- Linnaeae, Urve. "Preliminary Report of an Archaeological Survey of Placentia Bay." ms, Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, 1971.
- Mercer, E., S. Mahoney, K. Curnew, and C. Finley. "Distribution and Abundance of Insular Newfoundland Caribou and the Effects of Human Activities." In Thomas C. Meredith and Arthur M. Martell, eds. *Proceedings of the Second North American Caribou Workshop, Val Morin, Quebec, 17-20 October, 1984*. Montreal: Centre for Northern Studies and Research, McGill Univ., 1985, 23.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot. *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.
- Neary, Peter, and Patrick O'Flaherty. *Part of the Main: An Illustrated History of Newfoundland and Labrador*. St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1983.
- Penney, Gerald. "An Archaeological Survey of the North Side of Trinity Bay, from Cape Bonavista to the Isthmus of Avalon." ms, Newfoundland Museum, St. John's, 1978.
- Proulx, Jean-Pierre. *The Military History of Placentia: A Study of the French Fortifications*. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979.
- Quinn, David. B., ed. (with Alison M. Quinn and Susan Hillier). *Newfoundland from Fishery to Colony. Northwest Passage Searches*. Vol. 4 of *New American World: A*

Documentary History of North America to 1612. 5 vols. New York: Arno Press and Hector Bye, Inc., 1979.

Robbins, Douglas Taylor. "Stock Cove, Trinity Bay: The Dorset Occupation from a South Eastern Perspective." Diss. Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland, 1985.

———. "Preliminary Report on the Stock Cove Site." In *Archaeology in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1981*, 199. see Evans, Clifford O. above.

Rowe, Frederick W. *Extinction: The Beothuks of Newfoundland*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1977.

Schwarz, Frederick A. "The Little Passage Complex in Newfoundland: A Comparative Study of Assemblages." Diss. Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland, 1985.