AN ECONOMIC PROFILE OF FOGO ISLAND PLANTERS AND THE SLADE MERCHANT COMPANY: 1785 - 1805

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the consumption and production activities of thirty-three sample planters, clients at the Fogo Island facility of John Slade and Company of Poole, Dorset, England. Based on the Slade mercantile records, it concludes that the truck system, which defined Slade's relations with the resident planters, was not as oppressive as is often suggested. From 1785 to 1805 the sample planters moved from indebtedness (to Slade) to positions of surplus, and in general were able to mediate Slade's economic control.

Examined at five-year intervals, the Slade ledgers reveal how debt increased during wartime. Initially producing a wide variety of commodities, the planters specialized after twenty years, usually on cod. The seal fishery grew into an important adjunct of the cod fishery. The planters' consumption profiles changed as their families grew, their fishing patterns evolved, and they became familiar with the relatively bounteous Fogo environment.

RÉSUME

Cette thèse examine les activités de la consommation et production de trente-troi habitants-pêcheurs, en étant échantillon clients à l'Île de Fogo, en Terre Neuve, avant-poste de la Compagnie John Slade de Poole, Dorset, en Angleterre. Tiré de la documentation commerciale de Slade, on conclus que le "truck system," qui défini les relations entre Slade et les habitants-pêcheurs, n'était pas aussi oppressif comme s'est souvent suggeré. Des années 1785 à 1805 la situation financière des habitants-pêcheurs c'est ameliorée d'une situation endettée à une de profits et en générale avait le pouvoir d'éviter la manipulation économique de Slade.

Les grandes-livres nous dèmontre que, au commencement, on produit un variété de produits, mais après vingt ans les habitants-pecheurs se sont concentrés a la pêche de la morue. La consommation des habitants-pecheurs change simultanément lorsque leurs familles augmentent, et ils se sont familiarisés avec le milieu fértil de l'Île de Fogo.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCUSSION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

> It is hoped that this volume will prove a fitting contribution to the early history of North America and will throw new light upon a more or less obscure and little understood phase of British overseas exploration.[1]

Ralph Lounsbury's preface to his book The British Fishery at Newfoundland (Hartford, 1934) is an apt introduction to this study of the material and mercantile evolution of Fogo Island planters. Obscure and certainly little understood, Fogo's history has suffered from neglect, not without reason. The researcher attempting to illuminate the early lives of planters at Fogo is faced with a difficult task. Moreover, to understand the context of the planters' lives it is necessary to present a large quantity of introductory material on their physical, social, and economic environment. A discussion of the sample thirty-three Fogo Island planters examined in this thesis would be useless without an introduction to the realities of the environment of northeastern Newfoundland, the economic history of Newfoundland at large, and the mercantile history of Fogo with emphasis on the firm established by John Slade. When taken along with the findings regarding the consumptive and productive practices of the sample fishermen, it is hoped that this material will create a clearer portrait of the early years of settlement at Fogo.

The period between 1785 and 1805 was a time of great

change in Newfoundland history. During these years the migratory fishery entered its final stage of decline, and the resident island population surpassed the West Country merchants as the main source of fish shipped to market. This fundamental shift in the source and means of fish production was a result of many factors, not the least of which were the wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which made voyages across the Atlantic more hazardous. Consequently, English and Irish fishermen increasingly began to choose residence at Newfoundland as a safe alternative to repeated transatlantic voyages.

In the late eighteenth century, the West Country English merchants had also begun to change the nature of their businesses. At the beginning of the century these firms were simple fishing companies. Each year they hired fishermen in England and Ireland who spent the summer fishing off Newfoundland. All labourers, except for a few caretakers, returned home in the fall as the fish were taken to market. Gradually these fishing merchants employed fewer and fewer of their own fishermen and depended more and more on resident fishermen. Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, the merchants became largely suppliers of necessary goods to the numerous residents who, over time, settled on this side of the water. The merchants' control and profits depended upon the "truck system," which involved the trading of consumer goods and necessities to the resident fishermen (known as planters) in return for the product of the planters' labour: dried cod and other commodities such as furs or seals. The planters, with their family based work units, steadily

replaced the merchant fishing crews as the main source of dried cod during the period under consideration in this thesis.

The truck system was mutually beneficial for both merchant and planter. While the merchant was dominant in the merchant-planter relationship, the truck system also provided insurance for the planter. Credit was the operative principal in the nineteenth century resident fisheries. At the end of each season, the merchant ensured that the planter always had a small residue of debt which bound the planter into dealing with that same merchant the following summer. The planter, however, also had the security of knowing that the merchant was there to carry him through hard times. It was not in the merchant's interest to have his clients starve or move away.

Just prior to the period under study, 1785 to 1805, the northern areas of Newfoundland became particularly profitable venues for the pursuit of the fisheries. Although Fogo Island in Notre Dame Bay had been known to European fishermen for hundreds of years, it was extensively settled only when English merchants recognized the value of the seal fisheries. Other industries such as the salmon fisheries, fur trapping, and lumber production also enhanced northern Newfoundland's position as a viable area of settlement. By the late eighteenth century, merchant posts were set up in the more spacious northern harbours and one English merchant, John Slade of Poole, Dorset, established his main base at Fogo Island. The key to Slade's success on Fogo was his strategy of diversification. By handling a variety of products including dried cod, seal oil and skins, various types of

furs, salmon, lumber products, and other marketable staples, Slade could compensate for loss or failure in one product with gains in others.

Essential to the understanding of the Newfoundland merchant system is a knowledge of its place in the North Atlantic trade system. By the time northern Newfoundland was settled, Newfoundland had been supplying cod to the Catholic countries of Europe for over two centuries. Trade in the area was dominated by merchants based in West Country England. Many of these merchants made fortunes in the Newfoundland trade, and mobilized the political power in England necessary to safeguard their source of income. Because of its prominent position in the North Atlantic, Newfoundland was a target of inter-European military rivalry. The French, who had long been an important force in Atlantic North America, were a constant threat to the security of the British Newfoundland fisheries. Maritime historian G. S. Graham aptly described the international maritime rivalry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as "an unofficial process of war, a chronic feature of the struggle for wealth and power."[12] As well as the unofficial commercial wars, however, there were also military confrontations. The fisheries suffered during times of war; markets closed, fishermen were pressed into naval service, and general insecurity on the seas made shipping hazardous.

As in all history, the physical environment of Newfoundland, it's climate, and certain oceanographic conditions played an important part in Newfoundland history. A brief discussion of these natural properties is

particularly important to an understanding of Newfoundland since the patterns of industry, settlement, and society were all profoundly influenced by natural forces.

The documents of the Poole-based Slade company, which operated in Newfoundland under various names and managers from 1782 until 1865, are the primary source for this study of Fogo Island planters, who left no literary records. Particular attention will be paid to the Slade truck system and how the merchant and planter operated within its confines. The purpose is to recreate, to some degree, the early years of life at Fogo for a sample group of thirty-three sample planters who resided at Fogo or in the immediate vicinity of the island. Fogo was chosen because of its geographical and mercantile insularity, and because the papers of the Slade Company hold the potential for deep insight into early Fogo life. Fogo was also chosen for personal reasons, for in the 1770's Thomas Dwyer, my great-great-great grandfather, emigrated to Fogo from County Kilkenny, Ireland. Thomas Dwyer dealt with Slade throughout the period under study in this thesis. He lived in Tilting, on Fogo Island, where he raised ten children with his wife Elizabeth Burke. Alas, Thomas's dealings with Slade were too irregular for him to be chosen as one of the thirty-three sample planters.

The image of planters which emerges from this study is partial at best. There are many questions which arise out of the Slade data which simply cannot be answered because of the lack of literary sources for Fogo. Although the image is partial, it presents an elementary profile of Fogo planters

where before no such profile existed.

Choice of the the thirty-three planters in the sample depended on their longevity as Slade clients. Those who were included in the study remained in the Fogo fisheries for the whole of the sample period. Unlike so many of their counterparts, they did not work at Fogo for two or three years and then move away. The planters are the focus of this thesis. The Slade documents are the best vehicle by which we can hope to understand their world. A byproduct of this planter study will be a deeper understanding of how the Slade firm itself operated and was effected by various stimuli, such as international conflicts.

An important caveat must be stated at the outset: Fogo was not a microcosm of Newfoundland. Although some of the findings for Fogo may be typical of Newfoundland during that period, Fogo was also unique in many ways, such as the variety of available production activities.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCUSSION

The two main branches of historical writing from which information is drawn for this thesis are immigration history and mercantile history. The secondary literature which was consulted therefore falls under these two large classifications.[3]

Eighteenth Century Newfoundland: A Geographer's Perspective (Toronto, 1976) is one of several important contributions to our understanding of Newfoundland by historical geographers. Authored by C. Grant Head, this book examines mercantile activity, immigration and population

growth, and resource exploitation during what was probably the most important century of Newfoundland's growth, the eighteenth century. Head's book provides a broad contextual framework for this study of Fogo.

Shannon Ryan's M.A. thesis for Memorial University entitled "The Newfoundland Cod Fishery in the Nineteenth Century" (1971) sought to explain why the cod fisheries, with their enormous economic potential, declined during the 1800's and were unable to support the growing population of Newfoundland. The expansion of this thesis culminated in the publication in 1986 of Fish Out of Water: The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade 1814 -1914. Ryan, a historian, brought a fresh perspective to an area in which there has been little recently-published work.

The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy (1954) by Harold A. Innis is an important study by an influential scholar. Professor Innis's book is an exhaustive treatment of the east coast North American fisheries from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century. It is an indispensible reference for any study of Newfoundland mercantile development, since the fisheries were the lifeblood of the island's growth, until recent times. Professor Innis's main sources were government documents and diplomatic papers.

Keith Matthews's doctoral thesis, "A History of the West of England - Newfoundland Trade" (Oxford University, 1968) probed the entire character and structure of the most important of the European fisheries: Newfoundland. The links between West Country England and Newfoundland had been

studied only in bits and pieces until Matthews drew all of the evidence, as well as his own original research, into this masterful study of the British migratory fishery from its inception in the sixteenth century to its demise in the first years of the nineteenth century. This migratory fishery was the basis for the settlement of Newfoundland for both the English and the Irish. The key position occupied by Newfoundland in British strategic and mercantile policy was scrutinized by Matthews.

It is hard to overestimate Matthews's contribution to Newfoundland historiography. Using a variety of sources including Colonial Office records, mercantile documents, and shipping papers, Matthews sketched the West of England fisheries in great detail. Among the themes which he investigated was the West Country merchants' political power in England, which helped them safeguard their hold on the fisheries. He also revealed the operations of merchants in Newfoundland and identified the European market areas favoured by the West Country merchants. Matthews was the first researcher to delve substantially into labour recruitment, provisioning, settlement patterns, and the role of the Irish. He pointed the way to future researchers. Matthews did not deal with planter-merchant relations, nor did he follow the careers of a sample group of planters.

For the particular purposes of this thesis, namely a study of the clientele of a mid-sized company involved in the Newfoundland fishery, two other recent studies were helpful. Rosemary Ommer's 1979 McGill University PhD dissertation entitled "From Outpost to Outport: The Jersey Merchant

Triangle in the Nineteenth Century" provides excellent information and research into the Gaspé fisheries and the merchant structure around which they operated.

Ommer's work is useful for this thesis because she extensively examined the triangular structure of the fisheries trade as engaged in by one Gaspé cod merchant. Ommer found that the truck system as it operated in Gaspé was oppressive and exploitative. The triangular nature of the trade and the degree of economic freedom, for planters, provided by the truck system are both prominent themes in this thesis.

Another interesting study is Margaret Chang's "Newfoundland in Transition: The Newfoundland Trade and Robert Newman and Company, 1780 - 1805" (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1975). The topic and time frame of Chang's thesis are much along the lines of this one. Chang's case study analyzed one particular merchant firm during the final years of the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth centuries and revealed, among other things, the important yearly cyclical nature of merchant operations. She placed her subject, Robert Newman and Company, in the general context of the entire Newfoundland trade and studied them during the important years of transition. Chang devoted little space to the planters, however.

The other branch of historical writing which informs this thesis is immigration literature. Scholars interested in Newfoundland population studies and immigration are indebted to the extensive work of geographers. John Mannion's seminal work on the Irish in Newfoundland is a case in point. Mannion

has concentrated on the movement of the Irish to Newfoundland. His first major contribution was Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation (Toronto, 1974). This book examined the cultural adaptation of Irish immigrants to three areas of Canada: the Upper Canadian farmlands, the forests of New Brunswick, and the Avalon Penninsula of Newfoundland.

Much more important for the purposes of this thesis is The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography (Toronto, 1977), a collection of articles edited by Mannion which explore various aspects of immigration to Newfoundlnad. An excellent set of studies, most of the articles employ new methods or new data to examine the flow of migrants to the island. Gordon Handcock, a Memorial University geographer, analyzed the settlement in Newfoundland of West Country Englishmen and found that they came from narrowly-defined source areas in the English homeland. Rosemary Ommer dealt with Scottish movement to the west coast of Newfoundland and emphasized the importance of family and ethnicity, and in particular the Scottish clan system, as a cushion to the trauma of immigration. Other articles examined the settlement patterns and processes which evolved around the particular set of challenges presented to newcomers, including adverse geographic and climatic forces at Newfoundland, and the unique demands of the fishery. The Peopling of Newfoundland is a cornerstone in Newfoundland immigration literature, but none of the articles tries to assess the economic growth of immigrants within the confines of the merchant-controlled truck system.

This thesis draws heavily on the work of Gordon Handcock, one of the contributors to The Peopling of Newfoundland, especially his research into the Slade operation at Fogo. Handcock's PhD thesis, entitled "An Historical Geography of English Settlement in Newfoundland - A Study of the Migration Process" (University of Birmingham, 1979), does for the Newfoundland English what Mannion has done for the Newfoundland Irish. Handcock echoed Mannion's methods, using a variety of sources, including church records, indenture documents, and mercantile papers to trace the movement of West Country men from their homes in England to the outports of distant Newfoundland.

Handcock found that English settlers in Newfoundland came mostly from the counties in West Country England from whose ports merchants were conducting the Newfoundland trade. Since many of the fisheries labourers recruited by merchants chose to stay in Newfoundland after their indenture terms were complete, merchants became important vehicles for the channeling of settlers to Newfoundland, even in the years when settlement was officially prohibited. The Slades of Poole, for example, brought hundreds of labourers to the Fogo Island area, and dozens of these labourers settled there after their contractual obligations to Slade were complete. Handcock studied the Slades and many other merchant firms, and his findings are directly relevant to this thesis. The approach of this thesis, which involves following a group of planters for twenty years to see how their fisheries operations fared within the truck system, is an approach which neither Handcock nor any other Newfoundland historian

has, as yet, attempted.

This thesis is a compliment to, and an extension of, the above historical writings. None of the above historians followed a sample group of planters in a specific area for a spoecific period. This thesis provides a microscopic example of the larger issues discussed by Head, Matthews, and Innis. The scrutiny and statistical analysis to be aforded the Fogo planters in this thesis continues the discussions initiated by some of the above monographs. The tight focus on a group of sample planters permits an understanding of the year to year ups and downs of the fishery as experienced by one community. None of the above works allowed for such a personal and intricate view of the fisheries. It is hoped that this thesis will provide an intimacy with the material existence and economic growth of planters not provided in the larger works.

Whereas Handcock, Mannion and others have studied the migration of peoples from England and Ireland to Newfoundland, this thesis picks up the thread of inquiry once the migrants arrived and settled along the coast. It can be seen as an introduction to the issues probed by Ryan, since this study examines a new community and an embryonic industry which evolved into the huge mercantile structure which Ryan went on to study in such depth. Whereas the Chang thesis studies the late eighteenth century years of transition from the point of view of one merchant, this thesis will analyze those years of change from the perspective of the clientele of one merchant. This thesis compliments Ommer's study of the truck system in Gaspé, and challenges her concluding view of

mercantile oppression. Was the Slade truck system at Fogo as oppressive and rigid as the Robin truck system in Gaspé? The present study, therefore, will both compliment and in some cases challenge the existing secondary literature of Newfoundland history.

This thesis will examine the sample planters and their particular economic world with a view to clarifying several key questions: Was the Slade truck system a closed economy, or did planters have ample opportunity to operate outside Slade's grasp? Over the course of their "careers" at Fogo, did planters gain greater economic liberties from Slade or were they doomed to operate eternally on Slade's terms? Did the planters benefit from Fogo's diverse production opportunities, as did Slade? To what degree was there an internal market at Fogo, independent of Slade, in which planters could operate? Was there a specialization or exchange system at Fogo which allowed for planter flexibility?

Answers to these questions promise to give students of Newfoundland history an important snapshot of how a particular group of planters, in a particular area, during a specific period, performed within the confines of the truck system. The historical snapshot will be a partial one, but it is a snapshot nonetheless.

The primary source from which most of the data for this thesis is drawn is the Slade Collection, housed at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador in St. John's. The Slade Collection contains the records, ledgers, letterbooks, daybooks and other business papers of Slade and

Sons[4] which operated on Fogo Island and at various other locations in Newfoundland and Labrador from 1782 until 1865. Although the Slades possessed several facilities along the north and east coasts of Newfoundland, as well as in Labrador, the establishment at Fogo Island was their headquarters during the period under study. In the words of John Mannion, the Slade Collection "represents one of the finest documented statements on ordinary life in Atlantic Canada in the late eighteenth century..."[5]

The Slades were a typical fishing supply and merchant company based in Poole. Their bookkeeping practices were typical of any British firm of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. The extant ledgers, letterbooks, and other papers of the company, which amount to nineteen feet of archival shelf space, remained in the hands of other merchants and individuals in the years following the cessation of Slade operations in Newfoundland in the 1860's. The collection was given to the Newfoundland archives in the early 1960's, where it was studied and catalogued by the archivist Nimshi C. Crewe. Portions of the Slade Collection are also held at the Maritime History Archive of Memorial University of Newfoundland.[6]

The majority of the Slade Collection consists of ledgers which contained the accounts of the planters and fishermen who made up Slade's clientele. Like most merchant companies of the time, the Slades used the truck system. Slade supplied the consumer goods and fishing supplies which the inhabitants of Fogo and surrounding areas needed and wanted. Slade, however, did not possess a monopoly. Other

merchants operated within the vicinity of Slade's Fogo facility, some of whom may have been small-time traders who sailed up and down the Newfoundland coast, leaving neither records nor on-land facilities. Slade was simply the largest merchant in northern Newfoundland.

The documents of the Slade company are particularly useful for the task at hand since they are unusually complete. The ledgers, which contained the annual accounts of the fishermen staked by Slade, are particularly rich as a source since they enumerate the goods purchased and the products received as payment by the merchant. The profile of the Slade planters will therefore expose both their consumptive and productive habits. The structure of the Slade ledgers allows for a quantitative analysis of both type and quantity of all goods consumed and staples produced by the clients of Slade.

As well as ledgers, the collection also contains a limited number of letter books. These copies of the company's correspondence provide a sample of the forms of business communication used in the Newfoundland trade. The letters also provide a wealth of basic operational information on the Slade Company.

The Slade Collection also contains sample of indentures, promissory notes, ship's invoices, bills of lading, a rare inventory of the Fogo store from the year 1813, and other miscellaneous merchant papers. Interesting, too, are the "berry books", records of small accounts held for the most part by the wives of fishermen. Various types of berries were harvested from the surrounding countryside and

brought to the Slade store, where credit was obtained. In return for their berries, the berry book clients purchased silk ribbons, hairpins, and sewing supplies. The women of Fogo Island were not absent from the Slade economy.

In the absence of better documentation, the Slade Company records are an excellent vehicle for studying the planter experience at Fogo as well as the truck system and the fish trade in general. Moreover, the fact that so many of this company's operating papers have survived make the Slade papers an important historiographical record of information regarding life and labour in eighteenth and nineteenth century Newfoundland.

As will be shown in the following chapters, the Fogo Island economy was a diverse and mixed one. Many of the conclusions to be drawn from an examination of the Slade documents cannot be applied wholesale to the rest of Newfoundland. Although a few of the generalities surrounding the planter experience at Fogo are applicable elsewhere in Newfoundland, Fogo Island may be, in some ways, an historical anomaly.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. Ralph G. Lounsbury, The British Fishery at Newfoundland, 1634 - 1763, (Hartford, Connecticut; 1934) p. vii.

2. Gerald S. Graham, Empire of the North Atlantic: The Maritime Struggle for North America, (Toronto, 1970) p. 50.

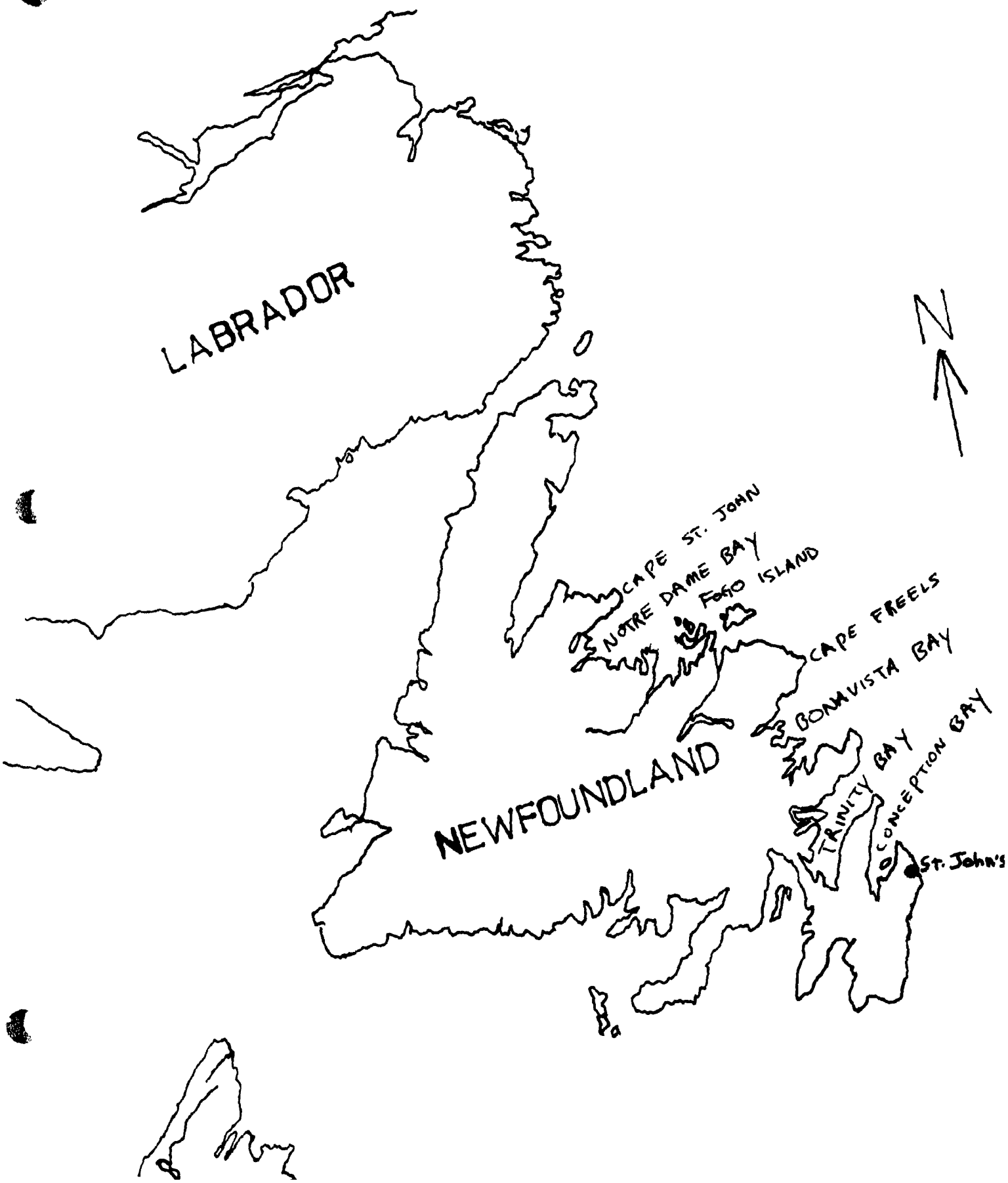
3. For an excellent discussion of Newfoundland historiography, see Peter Neary, "The Writing of Newfoundland History: An Introductory Survey," in James Hiller and Peter Neary, eds., Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Essays in Interpretation, (Toronto, 1980).

4. The firm was also known, at various periods and in various places, as Slade and Company, Slade and Kelson, John and Thomas Slade, Slade and Cox, Slade and Earle, and several others. See Chapter Three for a discussion of the history of this firm.

5. Correspondence, John Mannion to Allan Dwyer, September 23, 1987.

6. For a discussion of the history and contents of the Newfoundland Archives, See John P. Greene, "Provincial Archives of Newfoundland," Acadiensis, Vol.III, no. 1, Autumn, 1973.

MAP 1
NEWFOUNDLAND



CHAPTER TWO
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SLADE FACILITY AT FOGO ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

The "history" of an area or an era is profoundly affected by its natural environment. Climate, geology, geography, flora and fauna, and other aspects of the physical environment must be understood in order to appreciate man's life and experience. The physical environment of Fogo Island influenced the settlement patterns, methods of production, and daily life of those who settled there. Perhaps more so than in more environmentally hospitable areas of Canada, those who chose to live in Newfoundland were engaged in a constant battle with the forces of nature. The history of Fogo Island is the history of men and women attempting to carve a place for themselves in this wilderness.

The course of settlement and the commencement of mercantile activities in the Fogo Island area were preceded by two centuries of complex historical development. The north Atlantic fisheries were a diverse and complicated economic network. Their health was fragile, constantly buffetted by forces both man-made and natural. The development of Fogo as an important northern mercantile centre is typical of eighteenth century Newfoundland history, but it also exhibits some rather unique historical characteristics. This

historical background is essential to an understanding of the planter experience at Fogo.

CLIMATE AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Climate has been a particularly important determinant in the history of Newfoundland, where the weather is affected by both continental and oceanic weather systems. Meteorological forces originating above the Atlantic Ocean meet and struggle with opposing forces originating on the North American mainland. As a result, Newfoundland suffers from a characteristically unstable climate.[1] Lying in the path of weather systems coming off the continent which interact with warm air masses accompanying the Gulf Stream on its northern journey, Newfoundland weather is subject to frequent and violent change. Warm air masses coming northward with the Gulf Stream make Newfoundland winters warmer than more westerly areas of Canada. Correspondingly cold air masses coming from the Arctic and accompanying the Labrador Current bring colder summers.[2] A lack of heat-absorbing vegetation in the northern latitudes and barren, rocky highlands and coastal areas contribute to the general coolness of Newfoundland summers.[3]

One pervasive aspect of the Newfoundland climate is frequent thick fog on the east coast, and to a lesser extent in other parts of Newfoundland. This is caused by a mingling of cold air and water from the Labrador Current with warm air and water from the Gulf Stream.[4]

Arctic ice is another basic characteristic of the Newfoundland environment. Icebergs drift southward into

Newfoundland waters with the prevailing currents. The arrival of icebergs and the field ice pack varies from year to year, but on the average the east coast of Newfoundland is wrapped in a cocoon of ice by late January. The ice affects the temperature and salinity of the water, which in turn affects the ecological balance of the sea and the abundance or scarcity of cod.[5]

The fauna and flora of Newfoundland exhibit a curious mix of both arctic and continental plant life.[6] The first trappers to venture into northern Newfoundland found that arctic fox, with their thick, highly-prized fur, lived in the same areas as non-arctic animals such as beaver and otter. A diverse population of both fresh-water and salt-water fowl, of both arctic and non-arctic varieties, inhabited northern Newfoundland throughout the year.

There are several extensive geological marine plateaus (banks) surrounding Newfoundland. The shallowness of the water over these areas allows the sunlight to reach the bottom, and results in the proliferation of certain microorganisms, particularly plankton. The lowest link in the maritime food chain, these tiny life forms are the main staple in the diet of the caplin, a small fish which is, in turn, the main staple in the diet of the cod as well as many of the birds which inhabit the coast. Young cod feed on the abundant plankton.[7] The profile of marine life in the waters surrounding Newfoundland encouraged Europeans to settle on the mainland, beginning in the sixteenth century.

PHYSICAL SITUATION OF FOGO

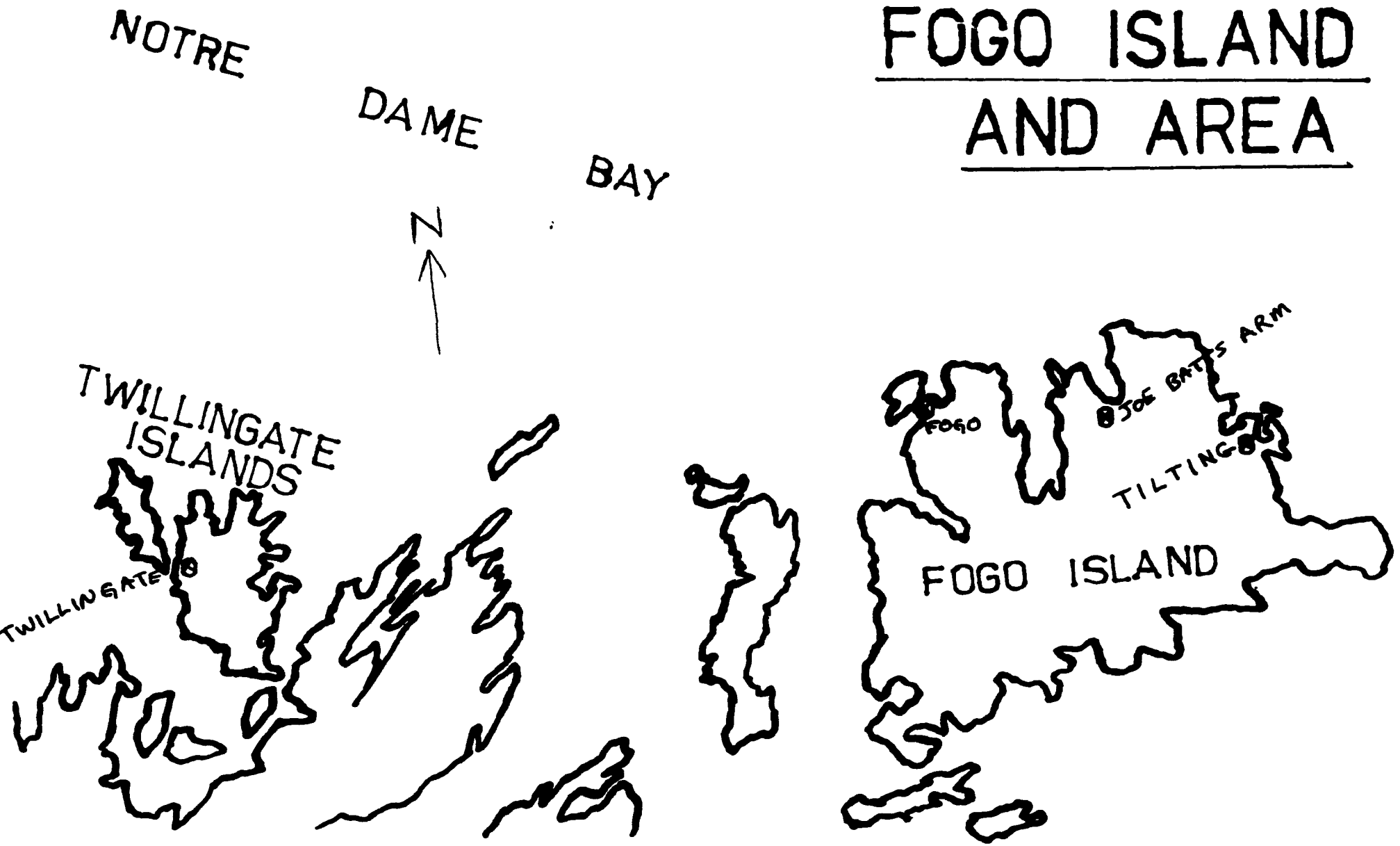
The chief focus of this study, Fogo Island, lies in Notre Dame Bay off the northeast coast of Newfoundland. At its closest point it is a distance of eight kilometres from mainland Newfoundland. At its farthest it is a distance of sixteen kilometres. The island measures approximately twenty-four kilometres latitudinally by nineteen kilometres longitudinally. (See Map, next page)

Fogo possesses a rugged coastline, with many small inlets, coves and harbours. The interior of the island is well-forested with evergreens, but the coastal areas are for the most part rocky and barren. Most of Fogo Island is at an elevation of less than seventy-six metres above sea level. Between the rocks of the barren highlands are extensive boglands. The little soil that is present is poor. Inhabitants of the island have kept gardens through extensive fertilization with copious amounts of fish and kelp. Drained by the many snall ponds running into each other and into the bogs, water eventually drains into the coves and other inlets of the sea.[8]

The mean temperature for Fogo in July is fifteen degrees celsius, and in January it is minus twenty degrees celsius.[9] Fogo has an average annual rainfall of two-hundred and twenty-four centimetres and an average annual snowfall of two-hundred and fifty-four centimetres.[10]

Fogo is icebound from January or February until April. The extent of the ice as well as the length of its stay varies from year to year.[11] All of the harbours and ponds (small lakes) are frozen over in winter, and when the winter

MAP 2
FOGO ISLAND AND AREA



ice pack arrives, a solid mass of ice interspersed with small and large icebergs extends for miles off the Fogo coast.

The harbours which were most suitable for human habitation were the first to be settled and remained settled the longest. The physical chracteristics of these harbours made them ideal as settlements for resident fishermen. Fogo harbour is the principal settlement on the island, even today. Settled on the north side of Fogo Island it is a large, sheltered, deep harbour. Sources of fresh water are nearby. Fogo harbour was for a long time the last port of call for men engaged in the northern fisheries.

After Fogo harbour, Tilting Harbour was the most likely point of settlement on Fogo Island. The harbour which eventually became known as Tilting Harbour is on the eastern side of Fogo Island and has a large, shallow pond which is connected to the sea by a narrow channel. A high island, lying several dozen metres from the coast, partially blocks the mouth of the harbour, keeping the sea out. The harbour is surrounded by relatively flat and sheltered areas, for the most part barren of vegetation, but which were ideal for settlement and fish production. Good sources of fresh water exist nearby, and although the area may have been partially forested when the first settlers arrived, the trees were soon destroyed. The wood was used for building flakes, houses and boats, and for fuel.[12]

Other significant harbours and venues of early settlement were Joe Batts Arm and Seldom, the former being a large shallow harbour on the north coast between Fogo and

Tilting and the latter being on the southern side of the island. Island Harbour, Shoal Bay, Deep Bay, Stag Harbour, and Barr'd Islands are also currently inhabited villages which were settled in the early or mid nineteenth century.

EARLY NEWFOUNDLAND HISTORY

By the time the Poole firm of John Slade and Company began operations on Fogo Island in the mid-1770's, and by the time Irish and English immigrants arrived in the area and began to avail themselves of Slade goods and services, Newfoundland had been a venue for the European fishery for over two hundred years. To appreciate the historical context of the Slades and their clients, a brief summary of the development of the Newfoundland fishery is necessary.

From the start, the main attraction of Newfoundland was the abundance of cod in the waters surrounding the island. The first European fishermen to exploit this were the Portuguese, but Spanish, French and eventually British fishermen soon followed. Realizing the enormous commercial and strategic potential of "New Founde Lande", the British were characteristically quick to lay legal claim to the island. In August, 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed into what would become St. John's harbour and claimed Newfoundland as a colony of Britain.[13] The French, meanwhile, had their own designs on the island and established a fort a Plaisance (Placentia) in the 1660's.

THE BRITISH MIGRATORY FISHERY

Under British control, the seasonal offshore or "bank" fishery evolved to the point where, in the late seventeenth

century, many of the British fishermen were establishing "fishing rooms" along the coast. The fishing rooms were tracts of land, equipped with rough dwellings, where the fish were processed. In the 1600's the fish were salted heavily and then shipped to markets in Europe. While this "green cure" was practiced by tne Portuguese and the French, who had access to large amounts of salt, the British developed the "dry cure" in which fish were dried onshore on rocks, stone beaches, or large wooden platforms called "flakes." Since the English did not have a large domestic supply of salt, they were obliged to preserve their fish by drying them onshore, and then only lightly salting them for the journey to market. The market for the product caught by the French fishermen was the northern parts of France, especially Paris. Their heavily-salted fresh fish was less likely to spoil than the dry British product, which had as its market the hot and humid areas of the Mediterranean.[14]

The coastal areas sought by the British were also valuable for the collection of wood and fresh water, and the repair of boats. The better harbours and coves were therefore an important link in the migratory fishermen's work chain, and an enticement to settlement. This was the genesis of the settlement of Newfoundland by the British and Irish.

According to convention, the first British captain into a harbour each spring claimed control of the area for the remainder of the season. It was only a short step from this to the practice of leaving several fishermen behind each fall as the fleet departed. Although the men left behind were to prepare for the coming season by repairing boats and flakes,

their main pourpose was to establish residency in the area on behalf of their employer.

European settlement of Newfoundland was officially prohibited until the early nineteenth century. The British government wanted to preserve Newfoundland's status as a nursery for seamen as well as maintain the profitable monopoly of the fisheries held by West Country merchants. This view of Newfoundland as a nursery for Britain's warships is disputed by maritime historian G. S. Graham. In Graham's estimation, a far more important source of trained sailors for the Royal Navy was the British coastal coal trade. The "colliers" provided a far more numerous and readily accessible naval force than did the Newfoundland fisheries.[15]

The physical characteristics of the island of Newfoundland made it impossible for British authorities to enforce anti-settlement provisions. Although West Country merchants recognized the threat to their monopoly posed by large scale settlement, they tacitly encouraged settlement by bringing out fresh labourers each year. The merchants were well aware of the tendency for some servants to strike out on their own after their terms of indenture had been completed. The British government, slowly realizing that prohibition of settlement was useless, began putting in place measures for the protection of inhabitants' civil liberties. These measures, however, risked encouraging Newfoundland's status as a refuge for sailors escaping the Royal Navy's press gangs. In 1792 a system of surrogate courts was set up, and a supreme court of both civil and criminal jurisdiction was put into place in St. John's. By 1817, the British had accepted

the existence of large-scale settlement at Newfoundland, and it was decided that the governor should reside year-round at Newfoundland rather than only in the summer during the fishery.[16] With this initiative the British government officially accepted what two or three generations of Newfoundland residents had long known: Newfoundland was a colony of year-round settlement. In 1784, the British had allowed Bishop James O'Donel of Ireland to begin ministering full-time to the Roman Catholic (ie. Irish) population of the island.[17] London had therefore accepted, long before 1817, the inevitability of permanent settlement in Newfoundland.

THE TRANSITION TO A RESIDENT FISHERY

From the early seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century, a seasonal movement of fishermen from Europe to Newfoundland for the summer and back to Europe for the winter characterized the population structure of European Newfoundland.[18] The wintering population (those left to build up supplies and repair facilities) grew into a sizeable number of permanent residents of Newfoundland. They turned Newfoundland from a temporary residence for the summer cod fishery into a colony with permanent year-round residents. By the 1790's, "it became generally accepted, if not always appreciated, that Newfoundland's status as a fishing station had become innappropriate."[19] In the words of Keith Matthews, by the early years of the nineteenth century, "the fishermen had all moved to Newfoundland."[20]

Even though the British continued to insist, even into the first decade of the 1800's, that Newfoundland was simply

a migratory fishing station, over 19,000 Europeans wintered on the island in 1789.[21] Residents quickly found that they could supplement the fishery with other activities throughout the year such as the seal fishery in more northerly areas of the island, particularly Notre Dame Bay in which Fogo Island is situated. In the late 1700's the resident population quickly grew, not out of natural demographic growth but from the increasingly large numbers of people left behind as the migratory fleet departed.[22]

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Newfoundland trade fitted perfectly into the mercantilist trade system which was part of British imperialism.[23] By the middle of the eighteenth century, the triangular structure of the Newfoundland trade was a standard fixture. By this time, the Newfoundland trade was concentrated for the most part in the West Country ports and in London.[24] The financial base for the trade was the merchant houses of London and the West Country. The bases of production, of course, were the waters off the coast of Newfoundland. The markets were Mediterranean Europe as well as parts of the Caribbean.[25] Harold Innis described the operation of this staple-oriented network as:

> A three-cornered trade from England to Newfoundland, Spain, and the Mediterranean provided a basis for expansion, and gave England an industry with an abundance of shipping, an outlet for manufactured goods and provisions, a supply of semi-tropical products and specie, substantial profits, and ideal possibilities for the development of a mercantile policy.[26]

Another development in the late eighteenth century fishery occurred alongside the movement of merchants into the fishing supply business. The "bye-boat fishery" was a type of operation which developed in the second half of the eighteenth century. In this fishery, fishermen left their boats and supplies in Newfoundland and commuted to the island as passengers on the larger bank fishing ships each spring.[27] The bye-boat fishery was an inshore fishery and this smaller-scale operation, combined with the growing resident fishery, brought about a change in the way business was conducted by the West Country merchants.

The merchants were forced to adapt to the changing patterns of settlement. Seriously curtailed as a result of the Napoleonic Wars and other factors, the migratory fishery was rapidly being replaced by a resident fishery during the 1780's and 1790's.[28] The trend began before the commencement of the Napoleonic conflict. In the place of bringing out the fishermen to conduct the fishery for them, the merchants began to supply the residents, taking as payment their fish and oil, and other marketable products such as seals. In place of an indentured, migratory fishery, the merchants utilized the truck system, which entailed the supply of fishery equipment, household goods, and some comsumer goods in a barter exchange for the product of the resident fishermen's labour.[29] This was the basis of Slade and Company's operation on Fogo Island. The newly-formed truck system afforded two areas of profit: the stores at which supplies were traded to the planters, and the Mediterranean markets.

Trade between England and North America often stopped at ports in southern Ireland for labourers and supplies. According to merchant record, the Irish ports most frequently visited were Waterford, Youghal and Cork. Newfoundland historian Daniel Prowse wrote that the West Country ships stopped at Waterford and Cork in order to "buy Irish woolens...pork, beef, and butter and to engage Irish servants..."[30] Waterford distinguished itself quite early as the Irish port most intensely involved in the provision of labour. Most of the Irish who participated in the Newfoundland trade were collected from the Waterford area.[31] According to Mannion:

> Each winter and early spring these merchants and their agents hired young men and boys on a contract basis to fish in Newfoundland usually for one to three summers, and sometimes advanced cash as a security to the young men or their parents.[32]

Large numbers of English, of course, also settled in Newfoundland, and according to Handcock, those English who migrated to the Newfoundland fishery came from a strictly-defined part of the West Country of England. Unlike the Irish, many of whom were fleeing cyclical famine, political tyranny, or farm overcrowding, the English migrants seem to have been attracted more by the opportunities which existed at Newfoundland than pushed by disappointment with the lack of opportunity at home.[33] Handcock demonstrated that the area of origin for most of the West Country English fishermen was the counties of Devon, Dorset and the neighbouring border areas of Hampshire and Somerset. "The extent of the source is closely related to those West Country ports involved in the

Newfoundland migratory cod fishery, particularly Teignmouth, Dartmouth, Topsham, Poole, and Bristol."[34]

EARLY HISTORY OF FOGO

The colder northern areas of the island of Newfoundland required a different regimen of staple extraction than did the congested St. John's area and provided certain opportunities which did not exist elsewhere, such as the seal fishery. Some adventurous merchants, particularly John Slade of Poole, were able to take advantage of this situation and reaped a considerable harvest in the north of Newfoundland.

Fogo was the first "northern" area to be settled by Englishmen. English settlers first appeared at Fogo in 1728.[35] Nearby Twillingate was settled by 1732.[36] Although it is impossible to know for certain, Fogo harbour was probably the first area to be settled on the island, because of its easily navigable and spacious harbour.

A man by the name of Geo. Davis wrote in 1764 from Poole to Captain James Cook, who surveyed most of the Newfoundland coast in the latter 1700's, that

> Mr. Thomas Tizzard, who was the first person that ever drove a nail at Twillingate, or settled here as an Englishman, which was in the year 1732, he tells me that Fogo was settled 3 or 4 years sooner and that he has known that part of Newfoundland for 40 years and that he never knew a French boat or ship to the southward of Cape John --which is 14 leagues NNW from Twillingate...[37]

This information, by one who was in a position to know, indicates that Fogo was settled by 1729.

Once it began to be settled, the Fogo area grew rather

quickly. Fogo and Twillingate figured in the British government's statistical reports for the first time in 1733,[38] and by 1739 the governor at St. John's reported to London that out of a total of 1,118 boats in Newfoundland, 80 were operating in "Fogo, Twillingate, and the northern fisheries."[39]

According to Harold Innis, by 1738 Fogo possessed a considerable population: seven fishing ships, four sack (cargo) ships, seventy "passengers," fourteen fishing ships' boats, twenty four residents' boats, 135 byeboatmen, twenty-one families, and 215 residents, 143 of whom remained over the winter. That report also suggested that in the same year Fogo produced 19,000 quintals of fish[40] as well as seal oil worth £770 and furs worth £300.[41] This information shows both the speed at which Fogo developed and the diverse character of the island's economy. One of the main resources for the spread of settlements to the north was the availability of marketable commodities, such as salmon, furs and seals, which were scarce around the St. John's area. This report indicates that northern settlers were engaged in a more diverse commodity extraction regimen than simply cod fish. The shorter cod fishing season in the north, caused by the more extensive winter pack ice, forced settlers to explore other types of primary production.

There is evidence that Fogo grew rapidly into a place of year-round habitation. Unlike other areas of Newfoundland which grew slowly into positions of permanent settlement, Fogo <u>began</u> as a place of year-round habitation[42] probably because of its long distance from St. John's (the traditional

place of embarkation and debarkation for migrants) and the variety of year-round subsistence and production activities offered by the northern latitudes of Newfoundland. Most of all, Fogo became a place of early permanent settlement because of the potential of the seal and salmon fisheries and the opportunities for fur-trapping in the area.[43]

INDUSTRY AND THE PURSUIT OF SUBSISTENCE

The burgeoning seal industry was best pursued by residents as opposed to a commuting work force. Fogo Island eventually grew into one of the largest sealing areas in all of Newfoundland.[44] Seal skins had an esthetic value, and seal oil was valued for the production of candles and soap and the tanning of leather.[45] As early as 1742 the residents of Fogo and Twillingate were able to export £12,550 worth of seal oil.[46]

Once British merchants realized the profitability of seals, salmon and furs, they were quick to establish residents at northern posts to represented their interests and engage in the harvest of these commodities. But the seal fishery was the major factor promoting the settlement of northern Newfoundland.[47] Once established in this remote part of the Empire, residents devised a system of year-round subsistence activities which allowed them to survive in this seemingly inhospitable environment. This pattern required an efficient exploitation of natural resources.

The cycle began in the spring with the seal fishery. After the pack ice receded, the cod fishery began. Hay was gathered in the late summer and small garden plots were

harvested for their addition to the winter's stores of food. Cultivation of small areas of land were purely at a subsistence level.[48] Early inhabitants were able to bring garden plots into cultivation via fertilization. Only hardy crops could be grown in the Newfoundland climate, such as potatoes, turnips and cabbage. During the winter men trapped and hunted small game as well as birds and the various marketable fur-bearing animals. Foxes, marten, beavers, minks, and otters all fetched a fair price from the merchant. Frozen ponds and snow-covered barrens were used to gather and transport, by sleigh, wood which was used for fuel, boat-building, and buildings of various sorts. There was enough wood locally that the Irish practice of burning peat from bogs was not necessary in Newfoundland. The slow days of winter were also used for repairing equipment and building new boats. Other activities were pursued in more than one season, such as bird-hunting and berry-picking.[49] In the case of Fogo Island, birds eggs and feathers were harvested from the nearby Funk Islands, and trout were pulled from Fogo's many ponds.

The exploitation of these seemingly marginal resources complemented each other in terms of season. When two resources became available concurrently, however, or when a resource was pursued which required particularly complicated production procedures, then "labour specialization within family units was necessary."[50] This was an extremely important development in Newfoundland history. It meant that as the resident population of the colony grew, the emphasis on the family as a unit of production replaced the random

groupings of largely male labourers which comprised the merchant-formed migratory fisheries.

LABOUR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANIZATION

The history of merchant firms such as the Slades is more than the history of the leading personalities. Although businessmen forwarded capital and took the mercantile "risks" in the fisheries the numerous labourers who were in the employ of the firm, as well as the dozens of planters who dealt with the merchant in the debt-controlled truck system, are also responsible for the growth of the Newfoundland fisheries. Since this thesis will examine a group of these planters in some depth, a discussion of the dynamics of labour recruitment and organization in the fisheries firms will help set the stage for the arrival of the Slades.

Fishing firms needed various types of labourers at key locations along the coast. At the base location seamen, smiths, carpenters, sailmakers, clerks, shoreworkers,[51] barrel-makers, boat-makers,[52] and other occupations were needed. The merchants also organized winter logging crews which went to forested areas and harvested wood which was hauled back to a central location. The wood was used for the construction of boats, wharves and buildings, and for the repair of houses, flakes, fences, and boats, and for fuel.

The vast majority of labourers were employed for a period of two summers and one winter, an arrangement formalized in a legal agreement. The merchant and the labourer agreed to the terms of the employment in a document called an indenture. Some indentures called for terms of

three summers and two winters.[53] Most workers returned home after their employment instead of settling in Newfoundland. There were also certain employees who worked for the firm in Newfoundland for extended periods of time. These were most often agents and other clerical staff. When a firm grew to the point where it required large facilities, full-time managers were required. Similarly, when the founder (or principal) became so old (or wealthy) that he did not want to spend his time sailing back and forth across the Atlantic each spring and fall, an agent was established at the firm's main Newfoundland facility. These agents supervised the stores, manipulated the accounts, organized the loading and unloading of ships, and arranged for the winter employment of workers.[54]

GROWTH OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION AND THE TRUCK SYSTEM

The truck system was a "primitive system of exchange involving the extension of credit and the use of barter."[55] The exchange of cash was all but unknown. The local merchant was the sole supplier of those goods essential to survival. This fostered a certain degree of dependence. The fisheries were a very unpredictable industry. The summer's catch was usually the planter's only means of securing the necessary food, fuel, and clothing for the coming winter. Merchants were usually willing to forward supplies on credit, but several bad summers might lead a planter into a situation of seriousness indebtedness. Since there was no alternative source of income, a planter in these straights would have no choice but to stay and carry on, praying for a run of

profitable catches.[56] Needless to say there were no social or charitable organizations to help planters[57] whose indebtedness had become severe.

According to David Lee, an historian of the Gaspé fisheries, the truck system (which operated in Gaspé in virtually the same form as in Newfoundland) was a crude form of insurance protection. In his view the merchants' dependence upon the planters for their supply of commodities curtailed any large-scale exploitation. It was not in the merchants' interests to see the fishermen starve or leave the fisheries. Nevertheless, "the fishermen were locked into a kind of economic serfdom."[58] The merchants ensured that the value of a fisherman's annual production never equalled his advances of goods for that year.[59] Each fisherman ended the year with a small debt, to ensure that he deal with merchant the following year to resolve (theoretically) that debt. Yearly indebtedness of planters, therefore, was the merchant's insurance that he would have a supplier of cod the following year and the planter's insurance that there was a merchant with whom he had an open account. Whether one sees this as a system of oppressive serfdom depends upon one's point of view. It could also be seen as a business arrangement, a type of contract, in which the two sides were bound into dealing with one another from year to year. Finally, since there was no alternative to fishing in eighteenth century outport Newfoundland, fishermen had little chance to escape "the bondage of the truck system of credit."[60]

Profit was the motivating factor for all. The mansions

of the Newfoundland merchants on Thames Street in Poole could not have been erected without some degree of ruthlessness on the part of the merchants. The Slades were not immune to the temptation of greed. In 1804, a petition was sent to Governor Gower in St. John's protesting Slade's arbitrary setting of prices for goods and fish products. The petition read, in part:

> ...that the said merchants arrogate themselves a power not warranted by any law, in selling to us every article of theirs at any price they see fit, and taking from your petitioners the produce of the whole year at whatever price they think fit to give. In short, let it suffice to inform your excellency that they take on themselves to price their own goods and ours also, as they think most convenient to them.[41]

THE EFFECTS OF WAR ON TRADE

Wars frequently disrupted the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century fisheries. All of the conflicts which arose in that period hampered trade. The main problem was insecurity on the seas due to hostile warships. Many West Country merchants suspended operations in Newfoundland during the American War (1775 - 1782). Because of the risks on the high seas during wartime, labour was harder to find, and payments to workers were much higher. Those companies who continued to work during the war concentrated exclusively on the supply trade and brought out fewer fishermen. This encouraged the tendency toward settlement and a sedentary fishery in Newfoundland at the end of the eighteenth century.[42] The American colonies had also been a place to

which many labourers went after the terms of their indentures were over, and sometimes before. The cessation of contact with the colonies during the war and the less than total return to normal relations after the war removed America as a destination for many Newfoundland labourers. This also forced the population at Newfoundland to become more permanent.[43] The merchants were happy to supply the growing resident population.

Danger to shipping during wartime was the most serious concern of the merchants. One attempt by the government to solve this problem was the formation of convoys. Ships sent in a convoy had lower insurance costs and the benefit of military protection. The convoys were slow to get assembled, however, and they were a conspicuous target as they lumbered across the ocean. Moreover, when a convoy arrived at a market city, the prices for fish dropped as the captains of the various ships desperately tried to sell their cargoes, and as the purchaser manoeuvered to get the best price. Merchants were required by law to use the convoys, but several more adventurous merchants chose a dangerous but profitable alternative. "Going on the run" was when a ship slipped out of port at night and made a dash for market alone and without protection. Only the boldest of captains would agree to this, and they depended upon speed and luck to make the voyage unscathed through hostile waters. These ships were more expensive to insure, but they offset this expense by being the first to arrive at market ports. They could then get a high wartime price for their fish and avoid the low prices which were inevitable when the flood of convoy cargoes

arrived.[64]

Another serious effect of war was the slowing down of merchant communications. Letters sent in September advising managers of market conditions might not arrive until May or June of the following year. It was hard for merchants to organize their trade when the essential information regarding prices, supplies, and demands was frustratingly slow in coming. If a firm's ship was sunk by the enemy, this information might never arrive.[65] The end of war was always greeted with relief, as it meant fewer ship losses, lower freight and insurance rates, and more abundant and cheap labour supply, and open markets for staple goods.[66]

CONCLUSION

The climate and geography of Fogo dictated the industry, agriculture, and settlement patterns which eventually took hold. Fogo Island developed within the context of a large, complicated mercantile and strategic transatlantic network. What differentiated Notre Dame Bay from other areas of the Newfoundland trade was the diversity of the commodity extraction regime encouraged by merchants such as the Slades of Poole.

As the resident population of Newfoundland grew, merchants such as Slade altered their businesses from fishing companies to traders. They supplied planters through a type of barter exchange system known as the truck system. A detailed analysis of the Slade operation at Fogo will provide insight into the evolution of one rather innovative

Newfoundland merchant and the truck system which he used.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

1. Lounsbury, The British Fishery, p.12.
2. William Francis Summers, "A Geographical Analysis of Population Trends at Newfoundland," Unpublished PhD thesis, McGill University, 1956, p. 40.
3. Summers, p. 55.
4. Summers, p. 45.
5. Lounsbury, pp. 11 - 13.
6. Lounsbury, pp. 5 - 6.
7. Harold Adams Innis, The Cod Fisheries; The History of an International Economy, (Toronto, reprinted 1954) p. 5.
8. Summers, pp. 20 - 24 and p. 30.
9. Summers, p. 42.
10. Summers, p. 53.
11. Summers, p. 58.
12. C. Grant Head, Eighteenth Century Newfoundland; A Geographers Perspective, (Toronto, 1976) pp. 18 - 19.
13. J. Holland Rose, ed., "The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Volume Six, (Cambridge, 1930) p. 123.
14. Innis, p. 51.
15. Graham, pp. 55 - 56.
16. G.O. Rothney, Newfoundland; A History, Canadian Historical Association Booklet no. 10 (Ottawa, 1973) p. 20.
17. Rothney, p. 20.
18. Gordon Handcock, "English Migration to Newfoundland," in John Mannion, ed., The Peopling of Newfoundland, (Toronto, 1977) p. 16.
19. Shannon Ryan, "Fishery to Colony, A Newfoundland Watershed, 1793 - 1815," Acadiensis, (Vol.7, no. 2, Spring 1983) p. 51.

20. Keith Matthews, "A History of the West of England - Newfoundland Fishery," Unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford, 1968, p. xiii.

21. Jed Martin, "Convict Transportation to Newfoundland in 1789," Acadiensis, (Vol. 5, Autumn 1975) p. 89. It must be noted that this discussion is of the European population of Newfoundland. I do not include in my population figures the small but significant population of Beothuck indians who existed in Newfoundland at least until 1829, when the last of the Beothucks died in captivity. See Chapter 8 "The Beothucks" in A History of Newfoundland and Labrador, (Toronto, 1980) pp. 153 - 172.

22. Head, p. 83.

23. Mannion, Peopling, p. 11.

24. Lounsbury, p. 314.

25. Lounsbury, p. 315.

26. Innis, p. 52.

27. Ryan, p. 36.

28. Innis, p. 305.

29. Innis, p. 155.

30. Daniel W. Prowse, A History of Newfoundland from the English Colonial and Foreign Records, (London, 1896) p. 201.

31. John Mannion, "The Irish Migrations to Newfoundland," Public lecture delivered to the Newfoundland Historical Society, October 1973, p. 3.

32. Mannion, Peopling, p. 8

33. Mannion, Peopling, p. 9.

34. Mannion, Peopling, p. 7.

35. R. Cole Harris, ed., Historical Atlas of Canada, Volume One: From the Beginning to 1800, (Toronto, 1987) Plate 25.

36. L.F.S. Upton, "The Extermination of the Beothucks in Newfoundland," Canadian Historical Review, (LVIII, no.2 June 1977) p. 139.

37. Charles Fay, Life and Labour in Newfoundland: Based on the Lectures Delivered at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, (Toronto, 1956) p. 75.

38. John D. Rogers, Newfoundland Historical and Geographical, (Oxford, 1911) p. 122.

39. Innis, p. 148

40. A quintal is 112 pounds.

41. Innis, p. 149.

42. Head, p. 82.

43. Mannion, Peopling, pp. 5 - 6.

44. Chesley W. Sanger, "The Evolution of Sealing and the Spread of Settlement in Northeastern Newfoundland," in Mannion, Peopling, p. 143.

45. David Lee, The Robins of Gaspé, 1766 - 1825, (Markham, Ontario; 1984) p. 100.

46. Sanger in Mannion, Peopling, p. 141.

47. Sanger in Mannion, Peopling, p. 136.

48. Sanger in Mannion, Peopling, p. 136.

49. The yearly cycle of activity is explained well in Chesley W. Sanger, "The Evolution of Sealing and the Spread of Settlement in Northeast Newfoundland," in Mannion. Peopling, p. 136.

50. Sanger in Mannion, Peopling, p. 136.

51. Nimshi C. Crewe, "A Slade Monograph," Newfoundland Quarterly, (LXII, no. 3) pp. 39 - 40.

52. Roch Samson, Fishermen and Merchants in Nineteenth Century Gaspé, (Markham, Ontario; 1984) p. 51.

53. Handcock in Mannion, Peopling, p. 20.

54. Margaret Chang, "Newfoundland in Transition: The Newfoundland Trade and Robert Newman and Company 1780 - 1805," Unpublished MA thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1974) p. 18.

55. Sanger in Mannion, Peopling, p. 136.

56. Summers, p. 3.

57. "Planter" is a more suitable term for the independent fishermen who settled and began their own fishing operations with family and a few servants. "Fishermen" is a generic but confusing term which could apply to both independent fishermen (planters) and the indentured labourers who fished as part of a merchant's own fishing crews. "Fisherman" and "planter" are not interchangeable terms. While all

planters were fishermen, not all fishermen were planters.

58. Lee, p. 43.

59. Samson, p. 67.

60. Lee, p. 44.

61. Joseph Hatton and Rev. M. Harvey, Newfoundland: It's History, It's Present Condition, and It's Hopes for the Future, (Boston, 1883) p. 72.

62. Chang, p. 40.

63. Chang, p. 9.

64. Chang, pp. 75 - 77.

65. Lee, p. 61.

66. Chang, p. 83.

CHAPTER THREE
THE SLADES AND THE FOGO BASE

INTRODUCTION

John Slade was the most important mercantile and developmental force in the early years of Fogo Island. Through his recruitment of labourers in England and Ireland, his use of the truck system, and the longevity and stability of the business dynasty he founded at Fogo, he shaped the society at Fogo unlike any other force. The old-timers of Fogo still recall the name "Slade," there are landmarks and geographical features which bear Slade's name, and the Church of England in Fogo has a large plaque, inside the building, memorializing Slade's contributions to the community. Although the route through which Slade entered the Newfoundland trade was typical of his day, he exhibited a taste for innovation early in his career. Fogo Island was the base from which John Slade launched his successful and long-lived mercantile dynasty.

THE MERCANTILE HISTORY OF FOGO ISLAND

The mercantile history of Fogo Island is the history of frontier exploration and exploitation. A number of merchants established facilities at Fogo before, as well as during, the Slade years. The Slades, however, were able to stay longer and conduct a more lucrative trade at Fogo than any of the others. In fact, the Slades are known in Newfoundland history as one of the only firms established in the eighteenth century to last well into the nineteenth century. Their

operations at Fogo lasted until 1861. A brief outline of the merchants who preceded Slade at Fogo will help create the economic context for the arrival of the Slades in the early 1780's.

Jeremiah Coghlan was the first large-scale merchant to use Fogo as a base. After the "opening" of Fogo in 1729, merchants from southern areas such as Trinity probably skirted the coastline of Notre Dame Bay, establishing residents and exploiting the seal and cod fisheries. The first thirty years of the Fogo fishery, from 1729 until 1760, are in large part undocumented, since the area was exploited in a random fashion. Coghlan was established at Fogo Island by 1764, initially as an entrepreneur and later as an agent for several Bristol merchants. One of the first to recognize the potential value of the Labrador fisheries, Coghlan saw Fogo as a suitably northern location from which to exploit Labrador. He did not depend solely on seals and cod; salmon and furs rounded out his mercantile pursuits. At the peak of his operation, Coghlan had eight to ten ships supplying Newfoundland and carrying the spoils back to England.[1]

When Coghlan went bankrupt in 1782, his trade network and facilities in Fogo were taken over by Thomas Street of Poole. Coghlan's troubles were also an avenue for the entrance of John Slade into the Fogo trade. Slade began his operations at Fogo in the year of Coghlan's downfall: 1782.

Benjamin Lester (1724 - 1802) was another Poole merchant who, although based in Trinity, fished as far north as Fogo. Lester's heyday was during the 1770's and 1780's when he made great profits from both the seal and cod

fisheries.[2] He was one of the largest and most successful of the West Country merchants. In the 1760's Lester's vessels made between fifty and one hundred voyages per year between Trinity and Fogo Island. Lester possessed stages, stores, wharves and other facilities at Tilting. Fogo Island was an important northern base for Lester's activities, and his Fogo Island operation was based at Tilting Harbour and not Fogo Harbour, where most large merchants usually congregated. Lester was probably the most wealthy merchant in Poole, where he lived next door to John Slade, the patriarch of the Newfoundland Slades.[3] Lester and Coghlan were the first to bring labourers from both England and Ireland to Fogo.[4]

There were other, smaller merchants at Fogo as well. From the opening of Fogo until the arrival of Slade, and even during the Slade years, there were numerous small-time operators who came and went. Several probably used Fogo as a base. None of these small firms, however, had the staying power or the growing power of Slade. When he opened up shop at Fogo in 1782, Slade had two essential assets: a strong capital base (financial support in Poole, probably from the merchant John Haitor) and established market knowledge and connections.

THE CAREER OF JOHN SLADE

John Slade (1719 - 1792) entered the Newfoundland trade during its most important years of growth and change. Eventually he became quite wealthy, "exerting in the process considerable economic influence upon the development of settlement in northeastern Newfoundland and Labrador."[5]

Born in Poole in 1719, John Slade was one of eight children whose father, a mason and man of modest means, died in 1727 leaving eight-year-old John Slade heir to only a small plot of land and a few pounds. John received some basic education, but soon left school, most likely to be apprenticed in shipping and the fisheries, which were the main businesses of the town of Poole. During John Slade's formative years, Newfoundland became extensively involved in the Newfoundland fisheries.[6] These early experiences helped mould him into a successful merchant.

Slade's early years in the fisheries were not particularly unusual or adventurous. His early career was typical of that of many merchants who became successful in the Newfoundland trade: beginning as a ship's captain, he later became a small shipowner. As Newfoundland settlements increased in number, these captains established their own Newfoundland premises, leaving caretakers in the fall to watch their investment. With the right combination of business acumen and luck, a captain could develop his own business, hire his own servants, and establish his own trading networks in Newfoundland. This is how Slade began.[7]

The first ship which Slade acquired was a ninety-ton brig called the "Little John." Slade's entrance into the trade as an independent captain was probably aided by his marriage to Martha Haitor whose father, John Haitor, had been successful in the Newfoundland trade in an earlier era.[8] It is probable that Slade's marriage to Haitor was a business strategy. It is also conceivable that Haitor himself arranged for his daughter to marry a Newfoundland trader so that his

little business empire could be maintained.

By the 1740's, John Slade was the captain of ships which sailed to the Mediterranean, Ireland, and Newfoundland. Slade's first recorded visit to Newfoundland was in 1748. Between 1751 and 1753 Slade was master of a ship owned by William Kittier of Poole, which sailed between Poole, Cork, Newfoundland, and the Mediterranean. In 1753 Slade acquired a ship and went into business for himself.[9]

Slade began his work in the 1750's in Notre Dame Bay, an area where only a few other English merchants had attempted to establish posts. John Slade was a pioneer in the sense that he diversified his exploitation quite early to include salmon, furs, seals, and lumber. He did not concentrate solely on cod as did most other West Country merchants in Newfoundland.[10]

Slade's business steadily grew. By 1759 he was exporting various supplies from Poole and importing cod oil and various types of furs, including seals. By the mid-1760's he had begun trading in Labrador and had extended his bases there to encompass the cod, seal and salmon fisheries. In the early 1770's the Labrador operations were expanded to include other types of furs.[11] George Cartwright, the Labrador explorer, merchant and diarist recorded the presence of Slade operations along the Labrador coast in 1773.[12] A decade later in 1784 - 85 Slade and Company "had stations at Battle and Fox Harbours, employing 16 men and taking 2300 seals."[13] In 1786, the Slades[14] were also operating at Indian Arm and Dog Bay in Labrador, and in that year they took sixty tierces of salmon, using two boats and four men.[15] Slade's early and

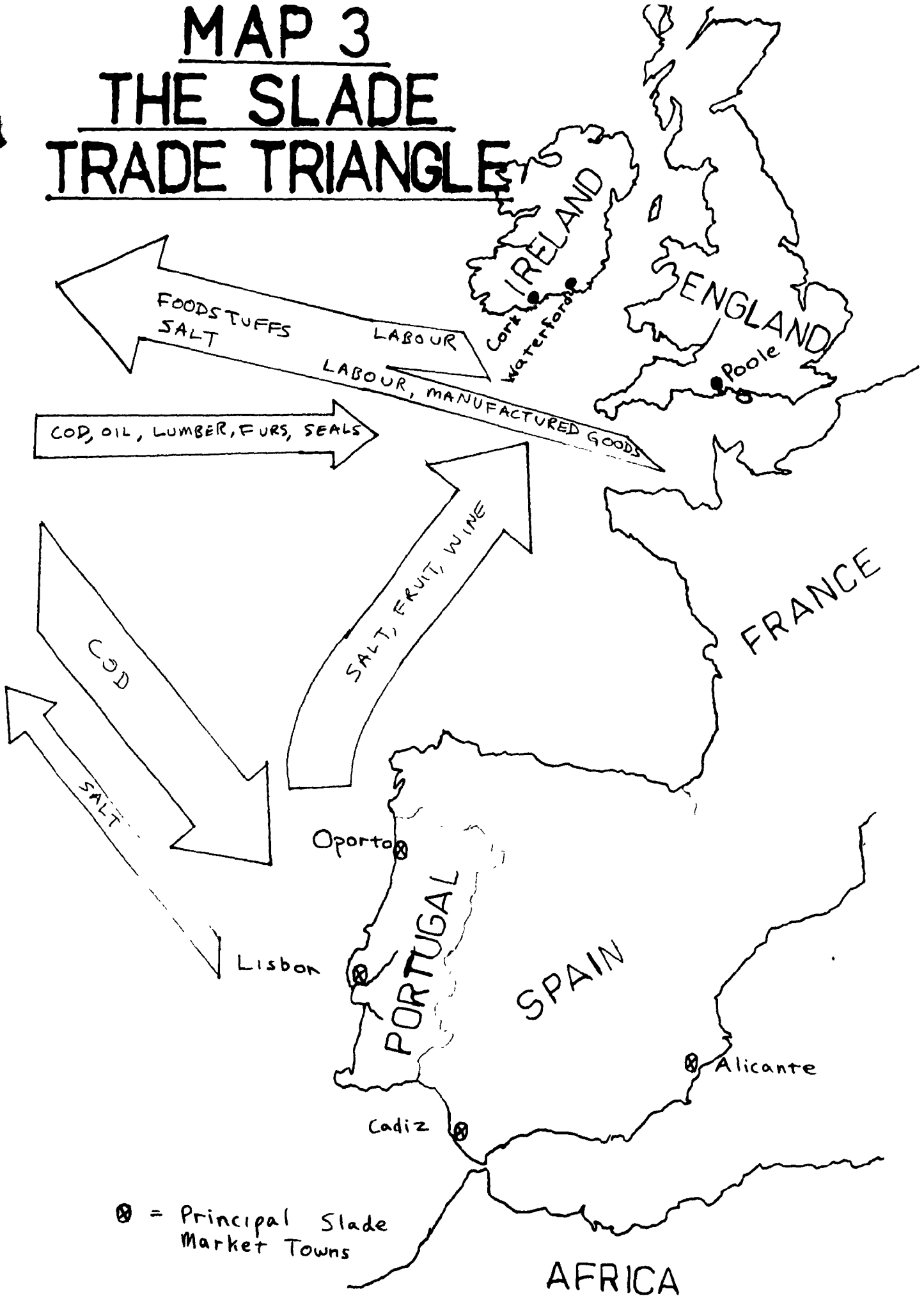
diverse successes in the Labrador fisheries are a testament to his industriousness, luck and the opportunities provided by northern Newfoundland.

By the mid-1770's, Slade was a typical mid-sized merchant. He had five ships, the large ones plying the Atlantic to the Mediterranean markets and the smaller ones supplying the various outposts along the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador. Slade traded with those areas of Europe most frequented by other Newfoundland merchants. The dry-cured cod produced by Slade and his planters was in demand in the hotter, more humid Mediterranean climates of Portugal, Spain and Italy. Alicante, Oporto, Lisbon, and Cadiz are some of the market destinations frequently mentioned in the Slade papers.[16] They were probably also the ports which Slade had visited during his early days as a captain.

In the case of the Slades, as with most Newfoundland traders, the production centre, Fogo in Slade's case, was one corner of a three-cornered trade system. Poole, the ownership area, and southern Europe, the market area, completed the triangular structure. Map Three, on the next page, illustrates the movement of goods and labour between each of the three areas. The flow of communications from one point of the triangle to the others was vital to the health of the firm, a point stressed by Rosemary Ommer in her PhD thesis.[17]

By the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, Slade had established Twillingate as his base.[18] It was not until 1782 when Jeremiah Coghlan folded up his Fogo operations that Slade opened a second large outpost at Fogo.

MAP 3
THE SLADE TRADE TRIANGLE



It is unclear whether Slade moved his operation to Fogo en masse, leaving a token store at Twillingate, or if the process was a protracted one, perhaps taking several years to complete. Slade's only experience with public office was as a Naval Officer at Twillingate from 1774 to 1776.[19] As Naval Officer, Slade commanded no men, he simply collected certain duties and taxes, assured a certain minimal level of military preparedness, and was a visible representation of the Crown in this remote corner of the British Empire.

Each fall, Slade returned to Poole and spent the winter in his comfortable dwelling on Thames Street, where he was the neighbour of other prominent Newfoundland merchant families including the Lesters and the Spurriers. By 1777 Slade gave up this migratory existence and resided year-round at Poole.[20]

Survival in the Newfoundland trade required persistence, shrewdness, intelligence and luck. The long life of the Slade dynasty is proof that the Slade firm had ample amounts of all these qualities. The trade was neither easy nor safe. Storms, wars and conflicts with Indians and privateers were constant dangers. Insight can be gained into the nature of the Newfoundland trade as experienced by merchants such as Slade by examining some of the hazards and setbacks they experienced in their quest for wealth. Natural disasters due to the ever-hostile climate were a constant danger. In 1775 Slade lost several vessels and ten fishing boats in a storm. Another storm in 1782 seriously damaged the facilities at Fogo and Twillingate. Wharves and stages were destroyed and at Twillingate 800 quintals of fish were

lost.[21] Another hazard was presented by the Beothuck Indians, who moved from the interior of Newfoundland to the coastal areas in the summer. Thomas Frith, a clerk of Slade at Fogo, was attacked by a group of Beothucks while picking berries with two young boys. Frith was killed and beheaded, but the two youngsters escaped. They ran home and apparently arrived at the Fogo settlement with arrows sticking out of their backs.[22]

In July, 1792, a group of planters from Tilting were approached by two canoes full of Beothucks while gathering bird's eggs and feathers from the Funk Islands, forty miles from Fogo. One of the planters fired a gun at the Indians, and they fled. Five years earlier two merchants from Fogo, along with their crew, were in Shoal Bay on Fogo Island collecting ballast for a schooner. They were attacked by a group of Beothucks and several of the crewmen were injured.[23] The merchants involved were Messrs. Clark and Handcock who had an account with Slade. There is no dearth of accounts of clashes between Beothucks and fishermen on or around Fogo.

The Beothucks were in the habit of walking off with supplies and tools belonging to local settlers. Slade once lost four valuable salmon nets in this way.[24] The Indians had a different sense of property and ownership. The planters, however, were enraged at what they perceived as thievery and responded by occasional slaughters of Beothucks.[25]

In the late 1770's Slade's business declined considerably, mostly due to privateers and man-made disasters as opposed to natural disasters. The American war was a difficult period for all Newfoundland merchants. It was

extremely difficult to acquire labourers because most able-bodied men were pressed into military or naval service. Shipping was also curtailed because of danger on the high seas and the loss of merchant ships to wartime service. This spurred settlement, as migratory fishermen decided to stay at Newfoundland rather than risk a journey back to England or Ireland. In 1778 American privateers captured a Slade ship in Labrador. The following spring Slade suffered a double blow when another American ship attacked Twillingate and stole one of his brigs. The Americans then ransacked Slade's stores and distributed the goods to the poor people of Fogo. The same American ship then sailed north to Slade's Battle Harbour facility in Labrador and commandeered another of Slade's ships.

During the war Slade had trouble finding labourers and so was forced to play dirty himself. It was during this period that Slade "stole" men who had already signed on to work with Benjamin Lester. Slade, who lived next door to Lester in Poole, waited outside Lester's offices and when freshly-signed Lester employees emerged, Slade bettered Lester's terms and brought the men into his own employ.[26] The Slades also suffered the travails common to any business venture. In a later period, when there was a Slade establishment at Trinity Bay, an agent of Slade named James Lanigan was sentenced to prison and deportation for the embezzlement of a small amount of money.[27]

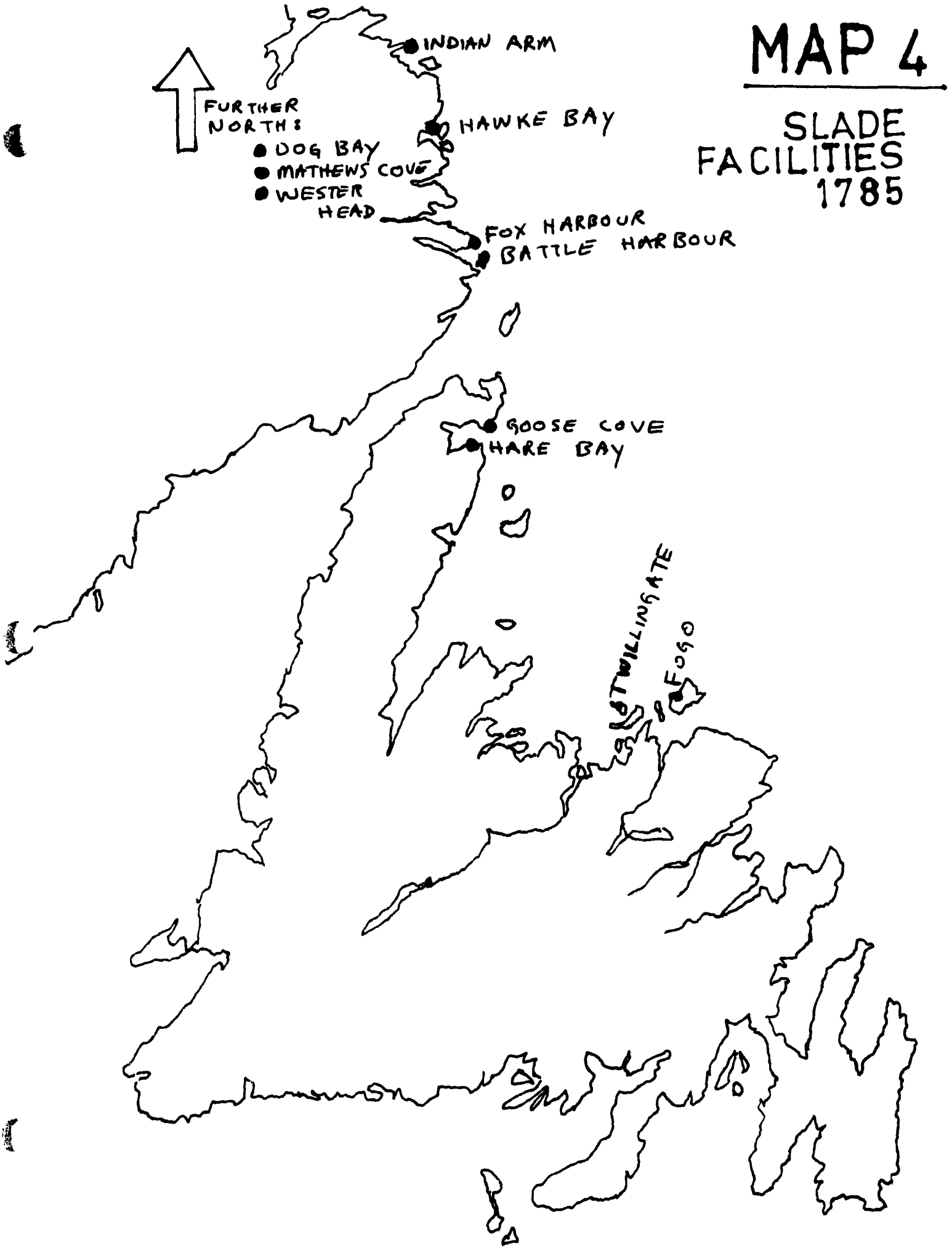
Slade made the biggest profits of his career after Coghlan's failure in 1782. The ledgers from the Slade Fogo operation indicate that from 1783 onwards, Slade traded with

over one hundred planters annually and employed between fifty and one hundred servants. Map Four, on the next page, shows the distribution of Slade outposts in 1785.

The 1787-88 season was a typically good year for Slade. In that year his company collected 2,200 seal skins, 200 tierces (large barrels) of salmon, 400 bundles of wooden hoops, 32 tons of seal oil, 2,000 gallons of train (cod) oil, 3,000 quintals of fish (in modern terms about 336,000 pounds or 168 tons), 24,000 wooden staves, 15,000 feet of board, 32 sets of oars, 30 pounds of beaver skins, 25 furs (fox, otter, marten) and other small items.[28] By the same year, 1788, Slade had five ocean-going brigs, the "Delight," the "Love and Unity," the "Fame," the "Stag," and the "Hazard."[29]

The diversity of Slade's products was obviously the key to his success and it was relatively unique to his trade. Merchants who traded in southern Newfoundland rarely had such diverse businesses; they tended to concentrate on cod fish. What began as a necessity for survival in an area of Newfoundland where the ice stayed longer and the season was shorter, became Slade's most valuable business strategy. It became the trademark of his business dynasty.

An 1805 invoice from one of Slade's ships, the "John and Thomas," exemplifies this particular business strategy. The ship sailed for Poole on October 13 with a crew of six men and a cargo which included 70 casks of train oil, 4 casks of seal oil, 1 barrel of blubber, 210 seal skins, 3 hogsheads (barrels) of berries, 30 bread bags, and 1,476 quintals (165,312 pounds) of dried cod. The ship also had in its hold the furs of 3 silver foxes, 5 patch foxes, 7 yellow foxes, 2


MAP 4
SLADE FACILITIES 1785
INDIAN ARM
FURTHER NORTH:
HAWKE BAY
DOG BAY
MATHEWS COVE
WESTER HEAD
FOX HARBOUR
BATTLE HARBOUR
GOOSE COVE
HARE BAY
TWILLINGATE
FOGO

white (arctic) foxes, 30 otters, 9 beavers, 1 "mountain catt" (sic), 6 martens and 6 minks. In freight the ship carried one barrel of furs for G. Rowsell and one cannon barrel for James Rowsell. Finally, there was one passenger, the same James Rowsell.[50] Not all Slade ships departing Newfoundland each fall had such exotic cargoes. Six days after the "John and Thomas" left for Poole, the "Standley" departed Fogo and "Sail'd to St, John's to join convoy for Lisbon." It had a crew of nine men and a simple cargo of 21 barrels of salmon and 3,138 quintals (351,456) pounds of dry cod fish.[51]

Table One shows the performance of the Slade firm during the years from 1785 to 1793. An examination of the table shows the growth of the Slade operation and its dependence on diverse types of commodities.

TABLE ONE
SLADE PRODUCTION DIVERSITY

Year	Fish Quintals	Salmon (tierces)	Seal Skins	Oil* (gallons)	Furs**	Board (feet)
1785	2,802	126	751	3,739	99	30,400
1786	2,790	187	784	4,964	57	9,036
1787	2,967	88	890	5,380	160	25,708
1788	2,909	203	2,154	5,239	25	12,744
1789	1,977	164	2,595	7,771	23	19,042
1790	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1791	2,008	161	2,421	7,072	5	20,587
1792	2,365	303	2,356	10,014	8	23,629
1793	3,629	321	392	5,359	8	24,351

* Seal oil and train (cod) oil are combined.
** Includes beaver, fox, marten, otter, and "catt"
Source: John Slade Name File, Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Table One is ample proof that the Slade operation at Fogo was engaged in a diverse staple extraction regime. Salmon, seal and oil production tended to rise in the first

nine years of Slade's presence at Fogo. Cod production, however, was relatively stable with an increase in volume at the end of the period. Fur production, which was initially quite important, declined in later years, perhaps an indication that fur source areas were being emptied by zealous trappers. Production of board and other wood products was also large. Other wood products not mentioned in this table included boats, barrels, buckets, boughs, barrows, staves, hoops, and oars. The men who supplied Slade were obviously very busy during the winter months, when transportation of wood products across the snow was easiest.

The figures in Table One are drawn from the Slade ledgers for the corresponding years. Along with the wood products which were mentioned in the table, in those years Slade shipped to market berries, blubber, calf-skins, and various sundry items. Anything that could conceivably bring a price in the Mediterranean or in Poole was cut down, killed, or caught by Slade's indentured employees and local planters.

John Slade died in 1792 at the age of 73. His estate at the time of his death was conservatively estimated at £70,000. Since Slade had no living sons, his estate was divided among his four nephews: David, John, Thomas and Robert. A portion was also given to a cousin. His estate included six ships between 60 and 150 tons, as well as numerous smaller boats, equipment, and facilities in Newfoundland at Fogo, Twillingate, Conche, and Wester Head and in Labrador at Battle Harbour, Hawke's Port, Hawke's Bay, Lewis Bay, Mathews Cove, Caribou Tickle, and Guy's Cove.[32] He presumably also left offices, furniture, and facilities at

Poole.

In his study of the Robin merchant family in the Gaspe fisheries, David Lee showed how the personality of the founder, Charles Robin, left its imprint on the mercantile strategy of the firm for the rest of its history.[**] This can also be said for John Slade and the business he began in Newfoundland. After his death, as the firm continued to be operated by his nephews, it continued to prosper and develop offshoots as various nephews broke away and developed parallel but independent operations under the Slade name. The firm, however, maintained many of the values and strategies which had been implanted by the founder. Some of these qualities are intangible but others, such as the markets with which Slade dealt and the types of staple goods he pursued on the frontier, had their genesis in practices which Slade had pioneered in his early days as a ship's captain. The strategies which enabled him to rise to a position of considerable wealth were adopted by his heirs, and enabled their company to survive for many decades after the death of the patriarch.

At his death, John Slade's firm certainly faced plenty of competition on the northeast coast, but it remained the only major resident firm. As Gordon Handcock has written, Slade was part of a community of merchant planters who copied one another's successes. The truck system which he pioneered and adapted to the circumstances of northern Newfoundland provided him with two distinct areas of profit: the sale of staples in the market towns and the sale of consumer goods to resident planters around Fogo. Slade's distinction lay in his

ability to stay so long in the same base area. He was also skillful at weathering natural and man-made disasters. His refusal to centralize his operations in St. John's choosing instead to stay in the north of the island where there was a variety of resources,[34] was the most important strategy which he willed to his successors in the firm. It served them well.

THE GROWTH OF THE SLADES

John Slade had a son, also named John, who was slated to succeed him in the fisheries and inherit the Newfoundland business. The son even began to travel with Slade to Newfoundland in the summers, but he died of smallpox in 1773.[35] Following his son's death, the aging John Slade Sr. brought his four nephews into the business to keep the wealth in the family. When John Sr. ceased travelling to Newfoundland each summer, his nephew John replaced him. John Slade Jr. was the chief representative of the firm from 1777 until 1792. He probably orchestrated the foray into Fogo from Twillingate in 1782. In 1793, after the death of John Slade Sr., John Slade Jr., the nephew, became the principal of the firm, based in Poole. The three other nephews whom John Slade Sr. brought into the firm were all very active by that time as well. Robert Slade took responsibility for the Labrador operations; Thomas Slade commanded ships and acted as an agent; and David Slade was the company's manager at Twillingate.[36]

In 1804 Robert Slade broke away from the Fogo-Twillingate base and started a business in Trinity using John Jeffrey's old premises. Robert was relatively successful in

Trinity Bay.[37] Thomas also withdrew in 1813 and formed Thomas Slade and Company with his nephew William Cox. They traded mostly in Bonavista.

The Newfoundland fisheries were as profitable for the nephews and other members of the family as they had been for the patriarch, John Slade Sr. For example, when Thomas Slade, who did not marry, died in 1816, he left over £65,000 to relatives.[38] The Poole historian E.F.J. Mathews reported that the Slades had three adjacent mansions in Poole, all of them sumptuously appointed and lavishly decorated.[39]

By the time the end came for the Slades they had been in the Newfoundland trade for nearly a century. In the 1860's a banking crisis in Poole caused several fisheries firms to fold. Unable to resist the trend toward centralization in St. John's, the Slades sold off the last of their interests in their Newfoundland businesses in 1870 or 1871. The Slades sold out; they were not driven out. The remaining few firms which claimed to be descendants of John Slade's original outfit did not descend into insolvency. Prudent businessmen to the end, they sold out and incurred few losses.

CONCLUSION

The Newfoundland trade was a complicated endeavour. Given the constant disruptions of war and natural disaster, only those firms which had a compact, diversified and efficient mercantile strategy could escape crippling hardship. Under their various guises the Slades were such a firm. Their basic operating structure, the aspect of their business which defined them and motivated them, was the truck

system. The supply of consumer goods and fishing supplies in a barter exchange for the fruits of the fishermen and planters' labour was the delicately balanced system which reaped healthy profits for the merchants and ensured a reasonable flow of goods to those planters willing to assume a small, and sometimes not so small, residue of debt. The following chapters will examine this system and how a certain group of planters interacted with the firm within the confines of the truck system.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. William Whitely, "Jeremiah Coghlan," Dictionary of Canadian Biography: 1771 - 1800, Vol. IV, (Toronto, 1979) p. 158.

2. Handcock, Historical Atlas, Plate 26.

3. See Plate 26 of Handcock, Historical Atlas, for an illustration of the Lester trading network.

4. Correspondence, Gordon Handcock to Allan Dwyer, November 26, 1987.

5. Gordon Handcock, "John Slade," Dictionary of Canadian Biography: 1771 - 1800, Vol. IV, (Toronto, 1979) p. 711.

6. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 711.

7. Shannon Ryan, "The Newfoundland Salt Cod Trade in the Nineteenth Century," in James Hiller and Peter Neary, eds., Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, (Toronto, 1980) p. 47.

8. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 711.

9. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 711

10. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 712

11. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 712.

12. John D. Rogers, Newfoundland: Historical and Geographical, (Oxford, 1911) p. 144.

13. W.G. Gosling, Labrador: Its Discovery, Exploration, and Development, (New York, 1910) p. 385.

14. In Newfoundland history, a merchant's firm is sometimes referred to in the plural, even if there was only one proprietor. In the case of the Slade operations in Newfoundland, the term "the Slades" is commonly used to describe any one of the branches of the business at any point in its history. The firm's outposts were run by several employees of Slade: Clerks, shoreworkers, labourers, etc. Fishermen referred to this group collectively as "the Slades."

15. Innis, p. 294.

16. Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (Hereafter cited as PANL), Slade Collection, P7/A/6, Box 25, 1823 Day Book.

17. Ommer, p. 138 - 139.

18. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 712.

19. Handcock, "John Slade," 713.

20. Handcock, "John Slade," pp. 711 - 712.

21. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 713.

22. Fay, p. 84.

23. John Hewson, "The Pulling and Liverpool Manuscripts," The Newfoundland Quarterly, LXXXIV, no. 1, summer 1988, p. 26.

24. Hewson, p. 34.

25. A good summary a Beothuck history vis-a-vis European Newfoundland is provided in chapter 8 of Frederick Rowe's A History of Newfoundland and Labrador. (Toronto, 1977) p. 153.

26. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 713.

27. Crewe, "Slade Monograph," Vol. LXIII, no. 1, p. 27.

28. Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland, John Slade Name File.

29. PANL, Slade Collection, Box 3, 1788 Ledger.

30. PANL, Slade Collection, Box 9, 1805 ledger.

31. Slade Collection, Box 9, 1805 ledger.

32. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 714.

33. Lee, p. 108

34. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 714.

35. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 713.

36. Handcock, "John Slade," p. 713.

37. Crewe, pp. 7 - 8.

38. Gordon Handcock, "Thomas Slade," Dictionary of Canadian Biography: 1801 - 1820, Vol. V, (Toronto, 1979) p. 764.

39. E.F.J. Mathews, "The Economic History of Poole, 1756 to 1815," Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1958, p. 19.

CHAPTER FOUR
PLANTER PRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Historians have often pointed out that the years 1785 to 1805 were years of great change in the Newfoundland fisheries. Few have examined the transition from the perspective of the fishermen themselves. While Shannon Ryan has looked at large scale market forces and politico-economic developments, and Margaret Chang has concentrated on developments at the level of an individual firm, the present thesis will examine the general changes in the state of the fishery from the perspective of the planters who actually worked the broad Atlantic.

THE SAMPLE

The Slade ledgers from the years 1782 onward provide an excellent source for the study of those men who dealt with Slade.[1] The obvious and most glaring limitation, which must be stated and stressed at the outset, is that Slade represented only one of several potential mercantile contacts for the planters. There were other merchants dealing in the Fogo area, and there were planters who brought their fish and seals to other ports, including St. John's. All of the following information, therefore must be assessed within this larger mercantile context. Many of the planters in the sample dealt with other merchants. In the cases of this sample of Fogo planters, though, Slade was their major mercantile

contact, and for many he was the only mercantile contact.

THE SLADE CLIENTELE: SERVANTS AND PLANTERS

In 1785, the first year of the sample, the Slade ledgers contained 258 non-commercial accounts. Commercial accounts are considered to be those held by agents in St. John's, or the accounts for any of Slade's brigs, in other words, non-fishermen. The rest of the accounts are divided between planters and servants. The servants (clerks, artisans, labourers) were the employees of Slade who were indentured to work in the Slade fisheries or at any of the Slade premises for a given period of time, at the end of which period they were paid their wages and transported home to West Country England. A very few servants were from Ireland; the rest were West Country Englishmen. The wages of the recruits ranged from £10 to £30 per year, depending on the work the servant engaged in and the year in which he was indentured. By 1805, Slade had 344 non-commercial accounts. With a few fluctuations, the number of accounts staked by Slade grew between 1785 and 1805 (See Table Two).

The thirty-three sample planters to be examined in detail in this thesis were chosen in the following manner. The list of non-commercial accounts held by Slade in 1785 was compared to the corresponding client list for 1805. There were forty-four clients who had open, operative accounts in both years. Of these forty-four planters who had stayed with Slade for twenty years, eleven were eliminated because they had too few accounts in the intervening years to merit inclusion. Their accounts for the intervening sample years,

TABLE TWO
SLADE CLIENTELE FOR THE SAMPLE YEARS

Sample year:	Total non-commercial accounts:	Number held by servants:	Percentage of servant accounts:
1785	258	134	51.9%
1790	304	165	54.3
1795	252	116	46.0
1800	243	72	29.6
1805	344	110	32.0

Source: Slade Ledgers 1785, 1790, 1795, 1800, 1805. PANL.

1790, 1795, and 1800 were so sparse that it was unlikely they were stable, resident planters in the Fogo area. The result was a list of thirty-three planters biased in two senses: first, they were the thirty-three planters who were able to remain in the area of operation for an extended period, and second, they were the planters in the Fogo area who dealt most exclusively with Slade.

The constancy and economic longevity of the sample planters in the Fogo fisheries was therefore their main criteria for inclusion. They represent seventy-five percent of the total number of planters who survived the twenty years from 1785 to 1805. Twenty-five percent (or eleven of the survivor planters) were dropped from the sample. The thirty-three planters who were chosen represent a base of stability in the settlement of Fogo Island. Of the total number of people who spent any time at Fogo, the sample represents a tiny minority. It is this minority which is being studied, not the hordes of transient labourers who passed through the accounts, but the few who chose to stay on and were able to make a success of their fisheries operations at Fogo.

All four of the five-year intervals for which data was collected, starting in 1785, reflect important changes, both local and international, experienced by the fisheries at the end of the eighteenth century. Collecting the appropriate data for each of the twenty years between 1785 and 1805 would have been much too cumbersome a task.

Three of the sample planters were Irishmen, the rest were West Country Englishmen.[2] It would have been next to impossible to trace the origins of all these men. The planters came from various places of origin, via various routes. Some may have come directly from England or Ireland and began fishing in their own right. Some may have been employees of Slade or other merchants who stayed at Newfoundland after their periods of indenture were over. Still others may have been planters or fishermen from other parts of Newfoundland or Labrador who migrated to Notre Dame Bay after hearing reports of good fishing there. Like all members of the resident and transient population in that period, they were a diverse group, and Fogo was an open society. The sample therefore contains planters of various means, backgrounds, and motivations. In most cases the only thing they had in common was the fact that they survived for twenty or more years in the Fogo fisheries.

It can be seen from Table Two that the percentage of accounts held by Slade servants diminished in the years from 1785 to 1805. This suggests that as the fishery slowly evolved from a migratory one to a resident one, and as the fishery came to be conducted more and more by the planters and their families, fishing companies such as the Slades

hired fewer servants. They were, it would seem, able to secure similar servants from residents. The lower percentages of servants in the later period also reflect Slade's movement from a migratory fishing company to one which supplied resident fishermen. As well as merchant practices, the structure of Newfoundland society was also changing. It is obvious that normal population growth would have lessened the need for servants on the part of merchants. But a similarly important development may have been that the nature of servant occupations also evolved with the growing population. Occupations formerly pursued by servants, such as that most important occupation of all, the cod fishery, were taken over by the residents. The remaining servants in 1805 likely filled positions at the Slade facility for which it was absolutely necessary to have an on-site "specialist."

The Slade operations grew, again with fluctuations, from 258 clients in 1785 to 344 clients in 1805. The most rapid period of growth was between the years 1785 and 1790 when the size of Slade's clientele grew to 304. This growth reflected the stability and prosperity of most Newfoundland companies during the late 1780's. The end of the American Revolutionary war in 1783, and the subsequent easing of the restrictions on transatlantic commerce created a favourable economic environment. The Slade operations at Fogo had been established in 1782, benefitting from the downfall of Coghlan. In his new environment and with renewed Atlantic peace, Slade began several years of great economic success.

The boom years, however, were not to last. By the year 1795, Slade had entered another period of economic

uncertainty. The effects of the French Revolution, such as hazards for shipping, caused serious problems for merchants in the Newfoundland trade. Appendix One shows the prices for certain key commodities as reflected in the Slade ledgers. The ledger for 1795 has been lost, but from the 1794 and 1796 data it can be seen that the prices of all commodities rose rather dramatically. As usual, merchants in the fisheries had trouble attracting potential indentured servants. Scanty labour supplies brought high labour costs. Prospective servants were unavailable; many had joined or were pressed into the Royal Navy or were employed in other wartime service. Moreover, the danger of ocean travel may have caused some prospective fishermen to shy away from work which required a transatlantic voyage. As stated in previous chapters, war created several serious hazards for merchants. Ships were costlier and more expensive to insure, crews were harder to find, supplies necessary for voyages were much more expensive, formerly open markets might suddenly be closed or blockaded, and pirates and privateers made formerly safe shipping routes virtually impassable.

Things were even worse by 1800. Not only had the number of accounts held with Slade declined, but the ratio of servants to settled planters was much lower. The French Revolution ended in 1802 with the Treaty of Amiens. By 1800 only 29.6% (compared with 51.9% in 1785) of Slade's accounts were held by his servants.

Periods of war or hostility fostered settlement at Newfoundland. Although the British government officially discouraged settlement at Newfoundland, they realized that

settlement was inevitable, especially during wartime. Labourers and migrants populated the coves and harbours in greater numbers during war. As the Slade data exhibits, Slade was not isolated from international events, even from his vantage point on the fringe of the Empire.

The Napoleonic Wars followed close on the heels of the French Revolution. The figures for 1805 show how Slade was able to recover in the intervening years and make a success of his business despite labour shortages associated with war. In 1805 Slade still had only 110 (32.0%) servants, but his overall number of non-commercial accounts grew from 243 in 1800 to 344 in 1805. These figures show that Slade had completed, or nearly completed, his transition from a company which hired indentured fishermen to a company which supplied existing, resident planters.

PLANTER PRODUCTION

Table Three, which illustrates planter production, provides an interesting commentary on Slade's transition during the twenty years of the sample. The table divides overall planter production into four major groups: Fish, Seals, Oil, and Other. The category "Fish" includes all types of fish brought to the Slade facility and entered into the client's ledger page, mostly salmon and cod. The item "Seals" covers all types of seals entered in the Slade ledgers, such as harps, bedlamers, rangers, and others. "Oil" refers to both cod (train) oil and seal oil, which almost always fetched the same price. Items mentioned under the heading of "Other" refer to all the other types of commodities which

planters brought to Slade to pay their debts. More than any other, this category reflects the true trademark diversity of the Slade operation in Notre Dame Bay. Items included in the "Other" heading are staves, hoops (wooden), barrels, boughs, board, planks, berries, feathers, and all types of furs.

These statistics describe several different levels of evolution of Slade's operation at Fogo. For example, the total amount of business noted in pounds, shillings and pence, of the thirty-three sample planters is a good indicator of the "health" of the Slade operation. By following this prime indicator of Slade's income as it grew and shrank from year to year, one can gauge the economic health of the Slade Fogo operation.

As was shown in Table Two, the years after Slade set up shop in Fogo were relatively prosperous; they coincided with a period of maritime peace. The total amount of business done by Slade with the sample planters grew from £473.7.1 in 1785 to £755.10.1 in 1790. As the effects of the French Revolution dampened world commerce, the sample's share of business with Slade dipped to £504.10.0 in 1795. The next two sample years, 1800 and 1805, however, were both years of growth. By then, the planters in the sample were becoming more established in the fisheries. Their individual fishing operations became more profitable as they became accustomed to life on the coast of Newfoundland. Some of the planters may have been born on Fogo and the small island was the only world they knew. With time, the planters were better able to weather the fluctuations of life in the staple-extraction world of Notre Dame Bay. There will be more discussion on this in the next

chapter, which will deal with planter consumption and debt.

The production categories merit close scrutiny. Fish was the planters' most important product and consistently accounted for the highest percentage of their income. Fish production, however was not without its fluctuations. In 1785, 72.0% of the planters' total production was devoted to fish. The 8.6% of the income represented by oil was

TABLE THREE
PLANTER PRODUCTION 1785 - 1805

Year:		Total:	Fish:	Seals:	Oil:	Other:
1785	%	100	72.0	1.8	8.6	17.6
	£	473.7.1	340.18.0	8.13.0	40.12.7	83.3.6
1790	%	100	66.7	8.9	11.8	12.6
	£	755.10.1	503.11.1	67.12.0	89.1.0	95.6.0
1795	%	100	48.5	19.4	23.4	8.7
	£	504.10.0	244.16.6	97.14.4	188.2.5	43.16.9
1800	%	100	73.7	4.7	12.3	9.3
	£	787.11.3	580.8.7	37.4.0	96.10.9	73.7.11
1805	%	100	66.7	5.7	19.9	7.7
	£	1244.1.5	829.18.5	70.11.11	247.12.1	95.19.0

Source: Slade Ledgers, 1785, 1790, 1795, 1800, 1805. PANL.

overwhelmingly in the form of cod oil; hence it can be safely said that over eighty percent of the year's returns came from the cod fishery. A very small amount was brought in by seal production, and 17.6% was devoted to the production of "Other" products, primarily wood products and furs.

By 1790, fish production had declined to 66.7%, and seal production had increased rather dramatically. This is consistent with the findings of other historians and geographers, such as Handcock, Head and Sanger, who have shown that the northern areas of the island of Newfoundland were settled primarily because they offered production alternatives in a region with a shorter fishing season. The

planters in this sample, however, did not replace their cod fisheries with seal fisheries. Since the seal fishery was prosecuted at a different time of year, its growing popularity failed to take labour or resources away from the cod fishery. Although the percentage of income derived from cod diminished, the amount of money brought in through cod rose substantially. The income brought to the planters through seal production increased even more sharply. Seal production came into its own on Fogo Island in the late 1780's. During this period of the growth of the seal fishery, which is illustrated by these figures, we can see the genesis of an industry which was to become extremely important for the inhabitants of Newfoundland from the late-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth.

By 1795, the first year for which negative market conditions are reflected in the statistics, the proportion of income generated by the cod fishery on Fogo had fallen further from 66.7% in 1790 to a low of 48.5%. Meanwhile, the seal fishery had grown in importance to a high of 19.4% of total planter income. Since the seal fishery, like cod, produced a byproduct of oil, oil returns grew with the seal fishery. The statistics for the first three sample years clearly show a declining emphasis on cod fish and a growing emphasis on the seal fishery by residents of the Fogo area.

The growing importance of the seal fishery in these first ten years can only be explained by relating it to the character of the sample group described by these statistics. As residents of the area, the planters of the area were in a much better position to engage in the spring seal fishery

than migrant fishermen or byeboatmen. Byeboatmen, those residents of Ireland and England who left their fishing gear at Newfoundland and then travelled to the island each spring as passengers for the season's fishing, rarely arrived in time to engage in the seal fishery. Their accounts with merchants like Slade show cod oil and cod fish as the sole means for the payment of their debts. The increasing importance of the seal fishery for the residents clearly demonstrates the growing strength of planters, and their adaptation to local conditions.

By 1800, the European political situation had stabilized and the markets and sea routes were opening. Better times are reflected in a surge in Slade's overall production as represented by these planters. But for reasons which are difficult to discern there was a leap in the production of cod fish, from 48.5% in 1795 to 73.9%, and a decline in seal production, from 19.4% in 1795 to 4.7% in 1800. The amount of money made through cod more than doubled in the five years after 1795, while seal income declined by more than half. Either the seal fishery was suffering from a bad year in 1800, caused by such things as an early spring or lack of pack ice, or the planters deliberately moved away from seal production for a while. Appendix One shows how the prices offered by Slade for seals remained basically the same in the years around 1800, while the price of cod rose steeply. But since the two industries were not practiced concurrently, there are no reasons for the planters to have stopped or slowed their production of seals in order to fish for cod. The only reasons for the decline in seal production

seem to be environmental ones.

By 1805, cod fishing as a percentage of total production had slipped slightly, and the seal fishery had risen slightly. In terms of income, seals were as important as they had ever been for the planters, but cod was by far the most important aspect of their production. In overall terms, the sample planters had by 1805 firmly established themselves, producing over 1244 pounds worth of staples, as compared to 473 pounds in 1785. This monetary growth in their importance to Slade seems to indicate that the planters were able to grow with Slade in an elaborate network of staple extraction.

The planters were men who were in the fisheries by choice. They were businessmen in their own right who followed strategies and took risks. Some of them made mistakes or had bad luck and disappeared from the Slade accounts. Others, such as the thirty-three studied in this thesis, were quite successful. Through hard work, diversification, and good planning, the planters provided Slade with an increasingly profitable volume of commodities. As will be seen in the discussion of debt in the next chapter, the planters also grew from positions of debt to positions of surplus over the twenty year period.

"OTHER" TYPES OF PRODUCTION

The category of production represented by the word "other" in Table Three deserves to be discussed independently of fish, seals, and oil since it goes to the core of Slade's business philosophy in the early years at Fogo. On what other

types of production did Slade and his planters concentrate?

In 1785, 17.6% of the production of the sample planters was devoted to items other than fish, seals or oil. In the early years of a planters' settlement, they were less established in the various fisheries and needed alternate sources of income, in addition to fish, in order to make ends meet. Moreover, Slade never limited himself to one product but welcomed, if not encouraged, the inhabitants of the area to bring him other marketable items.

The ledger for 1785 shows that the types of other products for which Slade traded with the planters included new boats and skiffs, built for Slade by the planters, otters and other furs, and boards, staves, and various wood products. The dates in the ledgers show that these products were brought to Slade early in the year, suggesting that many of the planters spent the winter in the bays and inland cutting wood and building boats.

By 1790, the percentage of planter production devoted to "other" items declined from 17.6% to 12.6%. In monetary terms, however, this was a rise from 83 pounds to 95 pounds. Non-fishery production was still an important aspect of planter income. Most of this production in 1790 consisted of wood products, such as boats, staves and hogsheads (small barrels). Other types of products were traded with Slade too, such as berries and furs.

An examination of one particularly industrious planter named Bazil Osmand shows the wide variety of products which planters traded with Slade. In 1790, Osmand traded with Slade for £104.10.7 worth of goods. On May 2, of that year,

Osmand arrived at the Slade premisis in Fogo with 440 "bad" staves and one Ranger seal. One month later, on June 6, he returned with 397 hogshead staves and 416 tierce staves. Two days later there was an entry in the accounts for two cat skins and two boats, worth 22 pounds. There were no more entries for the rest of the summer, but on September 9, Osmand brought twenty quintals of fish, ten gallons of oil, forty gallons of berries, and one new tierce. When the accounts were closed for the year, Osmand still owed Slade over 59 pounds, however. Perhaps this planter was desperate to sell anything he could to Slade in order to ease the mounting indebtedness. Although uncommonly industrious, Bazil Osmand's account shows that there was a wide range of production alternatives open to planters on Fogo Island.

The Osmand account may be an example of more than just occupational plurality. Since non-fisheries production was a key to Slade's economic success, it may also have been so for resident planters. The availability of a wide range of other products, along with Slade's willingness to trade for them, gave the planters a greater degree of economic flexibility, even freedom, than would otherwise have been the case. Slade's Fogo planters probably had more independence than has traditionally been suggested by Newfoundland historians.

"Other" types of production gave planters alternate economic power. The hewing of wood or trapping of animals required far less equipment than did the fishery. Moreover, these activities were not practiced concurrently with the fishery, and so did not draw off labour resources. Planters like Basil Osmand who were particularly industrious had a

whole range of production alternatives open to them, and were not dependent solely on the cod fisheries for their income. Planters in all parts of Newfoundland built boats on contract for their merchants but only in Fogo and other northern areas did they have so many other production alternatives open to them.

By 1795, non-fisheries production had declined to 8.7% of the total from 12.6% in 1790. Again, most of this production was in the form of wood products and furs. For the last two years of the sample this type of production stayed at low levels, rising slightly to 9.3% in 1800 and declining slightly to 7.7% in 1805. This other production was always monetarily significant, totalling over 73 pounds in 1800 and over 95 pounds in 1805.

Not all planters dabbled in other pursuits. Many of the planters were strictly fish and oil men. And there were several planters who, although they always fished for cod, brought in large amounts of other, non-fisheries products to Slade. The percentages and monetary amounts of this type of production, however, prove that non-fisheries production was very important to planters and their chief mercantile contact, the Slade company.

The lower levels of other types of production in the latter years of the sample may not indicate that planters were moving away from other types of production. Rather, planters may have been bypassing Slade. The Slade ledgers are a very limited source of information on the history and economy of Fogo. They are only one indicator of the mercantile activities at Fogo. It is probable that many of

the residents of the Fogo area dealt with Slade only casually, as one would a corner store. Thomas Burke, for example, was a ship's captain who resided in Tilting. He was known to be fishing from Tilting during the period of the sample, but his accounts with Slade are sparse. Burke was no doubt bringing his produce to, and his supplies from, St. John's, where he is known to have sailed.[3] Other shipowners, like Daniel Bryan of Tilting, Thomas Dwyer of Tilting, and Timothy Dwyer of Fogo certainly had the transportational means to bring their commodities to other merchants. The lower levels of "Other" types of production in the latter years of the sample may be an indication that the then long-resident planters had built, in their twenty years at Fogo, an internal distribution network. This is only speculation. There is no evidence to preclude that the larger planters were middlemen who, if nothing else, transported the produce of others to Trinity or St. John's. Slade did possess the means to police the coasts of Fogo and area, and perhaps looked on helplessly as an internal market developed Fogo and large planters ferried dried cod to other merchants in other ports. Such an internal market did not stunt Slade's economic growth, however.

Although Slade was the most important mercantile contact for the planters, he was certainly not the only one. Benjamin Lester, based in Trinity Bay, was operating on Fogo Island in the 1770's. He probably had a trading outpost at Fogo Island in the early years of Slade's tenure there.[4] Another mercantile contact may have been so-called "vagabond traders" who sailed up and down the coast of Newfoundland

dealing informally with planters and providing a mercantile alternative to mainstream firms like Slade and Company. More research needs to be done into the area of alternative mercantile outlets in Newfoundland before drawing firm conclusions on the nature of the planters' relationship to merchant power.

One can speculate, however, that the decline in the percentages of the other types of production in the latter years of the sample is a reflection that planters, who were well-established in their communities by 1800, had developed other routes for the dispersal of other types of production. Even the main product of their labours, dried cod fish, was sent to market by alternative routes than Slade. All the evidence and conjecture points to a limited internal market, independent of Slade, whereby staples could be sold and transported. Ship-owning planters, of which Thomas Burke is only one example, were able to bring their fish, and presumably the fish of others, to merchants other than Slade. Planters, therefore, possessed flexibility which they could use to maximize their independence and avoid the "economic serfdom" inherent in a closed truck system.

Rusty Bittermann of the University of New Brunswick has recently suggested that, in the case of nineteenth century Cape Breton farm communities, there was more social stratification in the countryside than urban-focused historians have traditionally allowed for.[7] Bittermann's ideas fit well the scenario of Fogo reflected in the Slade ledgers for 1785 to 1805. The planters studied in this thesis seem to reflect the successful upper crust of Fogo society.

There were dozens of accounts in the ledgers of men whose fishing careers constantly faltered. Many planters were unable to shed the yearly residue of debt. Still others appeared briefly in the accounts, for one or two seasons, only to disappear into the mists of Fogo's history. The overall impression is of a somewhat sophisticated social stratification at Fogo, and not a homogeneous clump fisher-folk who had no choice but to defer, as a group, to Slade and Company.

CONCLUSION

Planter production statistics for the thirty-three sample planters in the five sample years show certain trends in both their growth as producers and Slade's evolution as a an innovative Newfoundland merchant.

The cod-fishery, always the pre-eminent industry, declined in the early years of the planters' operation and was replaced to some extent by the seal fishery, which came into its own and grew in importance in the fifteen years after Slade established his firm at Fogo. In the latter years of the sample, from the late 1790's to 1805, the cod fishery regained its former prominence and the seal fishery settled into its role as an important secondary industry. The production of other, non-fishery commodities such as wood products and furs, while an important source of auxilliary income to the fisheries in the early years for the planters, declined in overall percentage of production but were always monetarily significant. These other types of production were possible because of Fogo's northerly location. They were an

important adjunct to the planters' income in the northern areas where the cod fishing season was shorter.

After twenty years in the sample area, the well-settled planters had probably developed a variety of mercantile outlets and distribution vehicles for their staple produce, the most important of which were the larger, shipowning planters who resided at Fogo Island.

Overall, Slade's income from the sample planters shows that his business grew steadily in the years after the American war with its attendent maritime peace. This was also the period when Slade moved into Fogo from Twillingate after the departure of Coghlan. It is plain from the data that the revolution in France with its co-requisite unstable maritime environment negatively impacted upon Slade's business much more than did the Napoleonic Wars. Slade's business declined considerably in the earlier revolutionary period but grew at Fogo despite the period of instability.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from this discussion of planter production is that the planters exhibited a degree of relative autonomy. They were able to develop their own production strategies and probably dealt directly with St. John's in some cases. This hypothesis requires more research, but there is no evidence to preclude alternative distribution networks and a limited internal economy. Larger planters probably transported the produce of their neighbours to alternative merchants elsewhere in Newfoundland. There existed at Fogo a social sophistication, the main indicators of which were varying levels of fishery success as exhibited in the annual Slade accounts. There was

not a homogeneous group of planters, but rather several strata of fishermen, from the successful, long-term residents studied herein to the short-lived, debt-ridden men whose relationships with Slade were brief and probably painful.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

1. All statistics for the tables in Chapters Four, Five and Six are drawn from the ledgers of the Slade collection, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador. Daily transactions at the Slade stores were recorded in a type of rough notebook called a Day Book. Eventually all the transactions were transferred to the formal account books, or ledgers. The ledger account for a given planter consisted of two pages: the left-hand page had the debits, or goods which the planter had purchased on credit such as food or fisheries supplies. The right-hand page had the credits, or the amount and value of the commodities which the planter brought to the store, such as seal skins or dried cod. There was one ledger book for each year, and it contained all accounts. The only information about the planter contained in the ledger entry was his name. The first ledger is for the year 1782, Slade's first year at Fogo. The ledgers continue with several missing years until 1832.

2. Appendix Two lists the names and nationalities of the thirty-three sample planters chosen for study in this thesis. This list may help future researchers who may wish to verify, expand on, or even disprove my findings.

3. Keith Matthews, p. 114.

4. Mathews, Historical Atlas, Plate 26.

5. Rusty Bittermann, "The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a 19th Century Cape Breton Community," Acadiensis, Vol. XVIII, no. 1, Autumn 1988. p. 55.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLANTER CONSUMPTION AND DEBT

INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter explored the sample planters as producers, essential labourers in a vast north Atlantic market system, this chapter will examine planters as consumers. These men had families and, in some cases, employees who needed to be fed and clothed. They had homes to improve and fishing businesses which needed to be outfitted annually. To understand this aspect of the planters' existence is to make an essential step toward defining the quality of their lives on the outskirts of an empire.

CONSUMPTION GOODS

The truck system as it was practiced by John Slade in Notre Dame Bay was virtually the same as that practiced in most other areas of the British North American fisheries. In his stores, Slade provided a multitude of goods which were necessary for the survival of planters on the remote frontier of North America. Slade, like most other merchants, also provided services akin to merchant banking for his clients. He forwarded small loans, guaranteed loans among some of his planters, and was a hub around which a number of financial services essential to the Fogo economy revolved. As well as the basics, like flour and rum, Slade stocked his stores with the non-essential goods which made life a little more enjoyable and less harsh for those who had to live their entire lives at Fogo. Slade provided no luxury items for his

clients, however.

Table Four, below, categorizes the items which appeared in the Slade ledgers and which planters purchased or received through trade under the truck system.

The four categories are "Fisheries" goods, those items and supplies necessary for the men to conduct the seal, salmon, and cod fisheries; "Household" goods, which were products needed for the establishment and upkeep of the planters' residences; "Food"; and "Clothing." Household goods are the broadest category. Although some of the "Household" goods were not essential for the upkeep of a home, they were part of the day to day existence of the planters, and so are entered in the "Household" category.

TABLE FOUR
CHARACTERIZATION OF CONSUMER GOODS

Fishery:	Household:	Food:	Clothes:
Salt	Candles	Tobacco	Hand-kerchiefs
Rope	Medicines	Rum	Raw cloth
Twine	Pipes	Brandy	Gloves
Pitch	Shot	Bread	Worsted
Oakum	Powder	Molasses	Shirts
Hooks	Nails	Butter	Hose
Lines	Axes	Cheese	Hats
Nets	Pots	Flour	Ribbons
Splitting-knives	Pans	Rice	Yarn
Lead	Cups	Tea	Thread
Barrels	Dishes	Coffee	
Hogsheads	Blankets	Oatmeal	
Canvas	Knives, forks	Pork	
Graples	Scissors	Beef	
Anchors	Combs	Wine	
Skiff nails	Soap	Vinegar	
	Gun flints		
	Scrub brushes		
	Hatchets		
	Guns		
	Door hinges		
	Locks		

Source: Slade Ledgers, 1782 - 1805, PANL.

PLANTER CONSUMPTION

Table Five, below, shows the consumption of four broad categories of goods by the thirty-three sample planters for the five sample years. As with the production table in the previous chapter, annual consumption statistics are noted as both percentages of the total and in actual monetary value (pounds, shillings and pence).

The total annual consumption for each of the five sample years is a good indication of the growth and evolution of the households of these planters from their earliest years to the near-completion of their time as fishermen. The total consumption in monetary terms was £525.16.6 in 1785, and by 1805 it had risen to £1231.7.3 Rises in the prices of commodities accounted for only a small fraction of this growth. As can be seen from Appendix One, the prices of commodities provided by Slade rose marginally during the years of the sample. The total amount of expenditures by

TABLE FIVE
PLANTER CONSUMPTION, 1785 - 1805

Year:		Total:	Fishery:	Household:	Food:	Clothes:
1785	%	100	17.1	4.5	73.4	5.0
	£	525.16.6	90.3.3	23.10.7	386.0.3	26.2.5
1790	%	100	14.5	4.7	74.1	6.7
	£	620.2.1	90.4.6	29.3.6	459.5.3	41.8.10
1795	%	100	26.5	4.8	64.1	4.6
	£	509.5.4	134.19.3	24.10.9	326.7.8	23.7.8
1800	%	100	30.7	5.7	54.5	9.1
	£	784.18.0	241.4.6	44.18.6	428.2.9	7.12.3
1805	%	100	31.0	9.2	52.9	6.9
	£	1231.7.3	382.11.11	113.8.11	650.18.5	84.8.0

Source: Slade Ledgers: 1785, 1790, 1795, 1800, 1805. PANL.

planters also follows quite closely the evolution of Slades' business as illustrated in the production table in the previous chapter. Total consumption by the thirty-three sample planters rose in the first five years from 525 pounds to 620 pounds. But by the third sample year, 1795, the planters' comsumption declined to £509.5.4 This was most probably due to the general hardships felt by all Newfoundland planters and merchants during the French Revolution. This drop in total consumption may also be an indication that planters were unable to buy the goods from Slade because Slade was unable to supply the goods in sufficient amounts. A cursory survey of the ledgers, however, shows that even during wartime Slade was able to keep his stores almost fully stocked. Constriction of shipping due to uncertainty on the seas caused higher prices for most commodities.

By 1800 consumption had regained its former vigour and rose steadily. It reached 784 pounds in 1800 and 1231 pounds in the final sample year, 1805. These figures show us that the financial situation of planters was neither stagnant nor unstable. Although the general economic factors which affected the whole of the Newfoundland trade had their effects on the Fogo Island planters, their long-term businesses grew steadily. That these men were able to increase their consumption substantially over the course of their fishing "careers" while, as will be shown later, their average annual debt decreased steadily, is proof of the potential for planter freedom within the Slade truck system in the late eighteenth century. The men dealing with Slade

were able to obtain a certain degree of economic power in their own right. The planters would not have been able to attain this margin of return had they been crushed under the heel of a tyrannical mercantile boot, as the truck system as often been made out to be.

It must be borne in mind throughout this discussion, however, that our planters were survivors who were chosen for the continuity of their financial record with the Slade company. Any discussions or conclusions must be accompanied by a caveat stressing that their longevity in Slade's books and their status as long-term settlers is an anomaly when put in the context of the hundreds of men who spent time fishing in Fogo. In terms of the total number of men who fished at Fogo (indentured or otherwise) in the period under study, these thirty-three planters are a rather small minority. But since they formed the stable nucleus of the settler population, and grew to become the principal citizens at Fogo, they are a significant group to study. They formed the foundation of the present population of the area.

An important question must be adressed: What happened to the many clients who "fell from grace" or otherwise disappeared from the ledgers? The fluidity and social instability of this period of Newfoundland history makes it extremely difficult to say for certain what happened to these men. Some generalities can be assumed, however. In the particular case of the Slade clientele, many of the accounts (especially in the early years) were held by indentured servants who returned home to England or Ireland after their term of service was complete. Other men, those who were not

indentured, but who had neither wives nor children to tie them down, might have moved to other parts of Newfoundland to try their luck or even settle down and start families. Still others may have been part of the steady stream of people for whom Newfoundland was a way station on the road to America or mainland Canada. And from a few entries in the Slade papers, it can be concluded that mortality rates from disease, fishing accidents, alcoholic overindulgence and even, in some rare cases, natural causes, account for a significant amount of turnover in the population of Fogo.

As with the production statistics, an item-by-item discussion of the planters' consumption for the five sample years provides interesting insights into the evolution of the planters' households and fishing concerns, as well as the seasonal cycle of planter labour and the role of the family in the fisheries.

"Fishery" statistics are the most closely associated with the production function of the planters since it was these products the men used to make their livelihood. In this category there was a steady growth in the amount of money devoted to the fishery. This fact, when taken in conjunction with the declining figures in non-fisheries production shows that in the early years of their settlement at Fogo, the planters concentrated on other types of staple extraction along with the cod fisheries, while in the later years cod became their central focus. The other types of activity waned, however, and by 1805 were replaced by the cod fishery as the first and foremost income source for the Fogo planters. In the first sample year, just over 90 pounds was

devoted to the purchase of fishery equipment. By the final year, 1805, over 382 pounds was devoted by the sample planters to the same category. Again, marginal price rises over the years do not account for the steep growth in the expenditures in fisheries goods. Rather, this growth can be explained by the planters' economic establishment over the long term. They evolved towards a concentration on one type of staple extraction, the cod fisheries, as opposed to a variety of different productions. More than anything else, these figures show the evolution of planters at Fogo from trappers, sealers, fishermen, and settlers in 1785 to established resident-fishermen in 1805.

As might be expected with a group of settlers becoming more solidly established over a twenty-year period, the value of economic resources devoted to household expenditures rose steadily over the sample years from 23 pounds in 1785 to 113 pounds in 1805. The planters, therefore, were able to spend more money on household and similar items as their fishing activities became larger and more profitable. Presumably, as their families grew, such expenditures increased.

There was also a steady decline in the percentage of income devoted to foodstuffs. In 1785 the sample, who were most likely at the commencement of their time at Fogo, and were therefore producing relatively little, devoted 73.4% (or £386.0.3) of their expenditure to the acquisition of food. By the end of the period the planters spent 52.9% of the total or £650.18.5 of their income on food. This decline was a fairly predictable occurrence. In the early years the single or newly-married planters were scarcely able to devote as

much time to gardens or hunting as they were in their later years. After twenty or more years many of the planters had grown sons and daughters to help with gardens and the fishery. Hunting became a more efficient pursuit, as the planters grew to know the terrain and wildlife better than in the early years. After twenty years at Fogo, the planters knew the movements of seabirds, game and fish more intimately than in their early years as fresh arrivals from West Country England or southern Ireland. They were also better aware of what garden crops thrived in the peculiar climate of Fogo. By the end of the sample period they were less dependent upon Slade for food than new arrivals.

This lessening of the amount of money spent by Slade planters on food from Slade's store is an indicator of growing self-sufficiency on the part of the planters. They had certainly gained an essential margin of freedom from Slade when they learned to produce their own food to some extent. Slade was thus deprived of an important aspect of control over the planters.

The consumption of clothing rose predictably over the sample period as the planters' families grew. It declined slightly during the difficult years of the mid 1790's, but never averaged more than ten percent of the total, and usually averaged around five percent. Large amounts of raw cloth and sewing supplies, as well as the items which could not be made by the women such as pea jackets or shoes, were the most popular items purchased in this category. It was fairly easy to discern when a single planter married because there were suddenly entries in the accounts for things such

as ribbon or apron cloth where there had been none before.

Planter consumption statistics, both as monetary aggregations and as percentages of the whole are an excellent way to plot the evolution of planters in newly-settled communities. Indeed, they are the only way to explore planter evolution at Fogo, since the planters left no literary records. In the case of those settlers at Fogo Island, researchers are fortunate to have the ledgers and other business papers of the merchant, Slade, who was the economic catalyst of the region. Although their dealings with Slade may have represented only a portion of their total economic activities, the size of the sample and the spread of the sample years allows the researcher to come to some fresh conclusions on the lives of the early Fogo planters.

PLANTER DEBT

Most research into the truck system has concentrated on the later period, the mid and late nineteenth century, and has used Gaspe as its sample area. David Lee, Rosemary Ommer, and Roch Samson portrayed the nineteenth century truck system as an exploitative and oppressive mercantile construct. While based on solid research, their findings threaten to tar all of the fisheries, in all areas of North America where the truck system was practiced, and at all times, with the same brush of exploitation. Were their findings true of the truck system as practiced on Fogo Island in the late eighteenth century?

Credit was the operative principle of the truck system wherever it was practiced. The absence of cash is a

characteristic of the truck system in all areas and at all periods. Debt was an important vehicle for both planter and merchant. While it tied the planter to the merchant, it also tied the merchant to the planter. The merchant, with his string of fishermen along the coast all owing him small amounts of money, was understandably reluctant to "cut off" his clients. Such behaviour on the merchant's part might lead to his own economic downfall.

Table Six, below, summarizes calculations of the debt or credit with which the sample Slade planters were left at the end of each of the five sample seasons. There is a definite pattern of movement from indebtedness to surplus which speaks volumes about the growing economic autonomy of the sample Fogo planters.

This table requires a small amount of explanation. The first column lists the number of sample accounts not reopened by Slade planters who had dealt with Slade in the previous

TABLE SIX
DEBT AND SURPLUS OF THE SLADE PLANTERS

Year:	Accounts not re-opened:	Average debt/ surplus:	Debt only:	Surplus only:
1785	0	£ -3.3.11	-7.4.2.	2.11.11
1790	8	-4.3.6	-16.11.8	1.7.9
1795	14	-1.8.9	-24.13.11	32.6.0
1800	3	+4.14.2	-20.15.10	22.18.6
1805	0	+5.8 6	-5.11.4	20.8.11

Source: Slade Ledgers: 1785, 1790, 1795, 1800, 1805. PANL.

years. The second column, "Average debt/surplus," is the average amount of the financial standings of all the sample planters at the end of each sample year. The third column, "Debt only," is the average amount owed by those clients who ended the season in a position of debt to Slade. In other words, of those planters who were in debt, the amount shown is the average. The final column, "Surplus only," is the similar average for those who ended the year with a surplus (ie. Slade owed them money), the average amount of that surplus was calculated and entered in the table.

Debts and surpluses were never paid in cash, the credit was carried over to the next season's ledger page and the planter carried on in the new season with the additional debt or additional credit owing to him from the previous year. Planters with credit, however, sometimes used it to purchase more consumer goods, hence improving their standard of living. There was no real incentive for planters to save in the truck system. Most planters did not, it must be noted, spend credit frivolously at the end of successful seasons. They understood the "feast or famine" nature of the fisheries.

The most striking feature of the debt calculations is that there was not a random occurrence of debt from year to year. There was a definate pattern of debt and surplus throughout the careers of the planters. From this debt pattern several concrete conclusions can be drawn.

The fact that fourteen accounts were not opened in the year 1795 is a further indicator of the instability in that year as a result of the French Revolution. The fisheries

slowed down in the mid years of the 1790's, owing to a rise in commodity prices and a decline in both merchants' and planters' profits. Moreover, some planters seemed to desert the truck system, for a while. That fourteen accounts by previously stable planters were not utilized shows that the planters fished at a purely subsistence level and did not deal with Slade during 1795, or that they moved to other parts of Notre Dame Bay to ride out the economic storm and were unable to deal with Slade. Since it is doubtful that a planter with ten or more years of experience in the fisheries would abandon his premisis, home and equipment to wander throughout Newfoundland during times of economic crisis, it is more than likely that these planters were still residents of the Fogo area during the hard times, but that they simply let their accounts with Slade lie dormant. The planters might have had accounts with other merchants, and so might have been dealing with someone else during those years. The large number of unopened accounts, however, suggests that many planters decided to, or were forced to slow down their operations during periods of economic instability. But all planters remained clients of Slade. Debt or surplus was carried through until the year when the account became operative again.

During these periods when large numbers of accounts were not opened, Slade may have refused to enter into dealings with planters whom he felt were too risky. This explanation is not consistent with Slade's own position of financial need during the hard times. Rather than shut planters down, he might have been expected to keep them

producing, perhaps lessening credit to protect himself.

The "Average debt/credit" amounts for the five sample years show an interesting, indeed startling, trend. While most planters understandably began their dealings with Slade in a posiiton of debt, (the average debt in 1785 was £3.3.11), by the time they had been dealing with Slade for twenty or more years, they were no longer in a position of debt, but rather exhibited a healthy surplus. Except for the hard times of the 1790's, the sample planters steadily progressed from an average position of debt to one of surplus over their careers. This finding is not consistent with the findings of other researchers who have portrayed a cradle-to-grave debt situation for fishermen. While such a harsh predicament may have prevailed in the later years of the nineteenth century, it certainly was not the case for Fogo in the period under study.

It is important to note that the figures in the table are averages. There were people who had surpluses in 1785 just as there were planters in debt in 1805. The overall trend, however, is unmistakeable.

The "Debt only" figures also yield predictable results in light of what has been found in the early stages of the present research. If plotted on a graph, the average debt of those planters who ended the year in debt would be bell-shaped. In the early years of Slade at Fogo, the average debt was rather small, but grew over the years, peaking in the mid-1790's during the years of crisis. The average debt amount then began to subside and by 1805 was lower than in 1785. Those who suffered under debt sank deeper into this

predicament when hard times arrived, but were able to improve their situation as the economy improved. The strikingly larger debt during the hard years may also be taken as evidence that Slade was more willing to extend credit, and in larger amounts, during the hard times. He and his company became more flexible during hard times, allowing more debt than he might have under usual circumstances, rather than cutting planters loose.

For those planters who ended the year with a surplus, explanations can not so easily be made. In the early years of the sample, the average surplus was rather low. It was £2.11.11 in 1785 and £1.7.9 in 1790. But five years later, in the years of economic turmoil, the average surplus jumped to a startling £32.6.0. In the years when the average debt load reached new depths of severity, the average surplus skyrocketed. And although it declined to £22.18.6 in 1800 and £20.8.11 in 1805, the height of 32 pounds in 1795 remains somewhat mystifying.

During the years of economic turmoil, the prices of seals, oil and cod rose. For those able to produce, it was a propitious time to move into a position of surplus with the merchant. This substantial growth in the average surplus amount, considered alongside the figures illustrating deeper debt during the hard times of the 1790's points to the importance of commodity prices in dictating the financial dynamics of the truck system during periods of instability. The relative large amounts of surplus and debt during the years after the French Revolution are more likely explained by higher commodity prices and higher expenses during war.

Those planters who were able to operate efficiently made more profits, and those unable to operate sank deeper into debt. The resumption of peace, however, seemed to lessen surpluses as well as debt loads. Perhaps there were commodity shortages, and surpluses increased because planters simply had nothing else to spend their money on, so it sat idle in the Slade ledgers.

CONCLUSION

Under the truck system as operated by Slade at Fogo, the planters had a certain degree of autonomy and economic manoeuverability. They had an ability to increase their income and move beyond Slade's grasp if they were diligent and benefitted from a small degree of luck. The power held by Slade was not absolute, and his little economic system was not a closed one. As stated earlier, the Slade ledgers represented only one aspect of life at Fogo. There were other merchants with nearby facilities with which planters could deal, and there were probably roaming traders who sailed up and down the coast, providing a mercantile alternative to the mainstream and immobile operation run by Slade.

A planter was not required to deal with Slade simply because he lived in Slade's area of operation. Thomas Burke, for example, ran a substantial fishery operation of his own, dealing with Slade only for sundries. Burke used Slade as one would a corner store, and he brought most of the fruits of his production directly to St. John's himself. He may well have brought the produce of some of his neighbours to St. John's, as well.

Consumption figures for the five sample years help to illustrate the growth and evolution of households, fishing operations, and financial records of the thirty-three sample planters who dealt with Slade. Among the conclusions which can be reached, the most striking is that planters ceased the diversified production regimes of their early years and settled into a position as simple cod fishermen after about twenty years. As shown in the previous chapter, however, the seal fishery was always an important secondary activity and other types of production, such as lumber harvesting, were always pursued. The planters needed to devote less of their financial resources to food as time wore on as well, because they developed a familiarity with their environment and were able to benefit from its bounteous qualities, such as they were. They relied less on Slade as a result. Finally, average debt and surplus figures show that planters, on the average, climbed from a position of debt to one of surplus during the sample period. While those with debt sufferred deeper obligations during war with its attending maritime instability, they were able to regain stability with the resumption of peace. While those in positions of surplus made even more profits during wartime, this also decreased when international hostilities ceased.

The general picture which emerges is that, for these long-term resident planters, Slade was not a mercantile oppressor. The Slade truck system operated in an open economy. Planters for whom Slade was the chief mercantile contact were able to use other mercantile outlets and were therefore in a position of unrestrained flexibility.

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to make a small contribution to the historiography of Newfoundland. It is the first time that a strictly-defined group of planters, who all dealt with the same merchant, have been systematically studied with a view to defining their development and how their operations were effected by certain external forces. Along with the financial evolution of merchants, the intimate view of the Slade company which is provided in this thesis allows us to monitor the evolution of one firm during the 1785 to 1805 sample period.

The fishermen who arrived at Fogo in the later years of the eighteenth century were small but significant parts of a large international economy. Most fisheries firms operated a triangular trade network between market, ownership base, and production area. The flow of labour, trade goods, staple commodities, and mercantile communications between these three areas was entirely ship-borne. The maritime world was an intimate one, as was suggested in this thesis, and developments in one area of the trade were echoed in other areas. The social and economic fluidity of the maritime environment and its susceptibility to change is a central yet unspoken tenet of this thesis. The thirty-three sample planters were a part of that maritime environment and felt those changes in their daily lives.

The climate and topography of Fogo Island, the area of settlement for the sample planters, greatly affected the

economy. Even their diet was determined by their physical environment. The planters learned in the years after settlement what crops could and could not grow at a subsistence level, and which species of game were worth the cost of the shot, or the labour required to trap them. The planters at Fogo were made up of Englishmen and Irishmen. Of the sample, thirty were English and three were Irish. While this may be a reflection of the lack of equal opportunity for Irishmen in the Newfoundland fisheries, it is more likely an expression of the ratio of English to Irish migrants at Fogo.

The Slade merchant company of Poole, from whose account books these planters were drawn and from whence their economic performance was charted, was a firm in a trade where tried and true markets and methods of production spelled economic success. John Slade's firm took advantage of the diversity of production alternatives available in Notre Dame Bay in northern Newfoundland. He pioneered the truck system of trade in the area, engaged in a variety of production pursuits such as fur trading, lumbering, the seal fishery, and the cod fishery, and developed a talent for weathering both man-made and natural disasters. This was his business philosophy. It made him wealthy and spawned a business dynasty in Newfoundland which lasted until the late nineteenth century. The impact of John Slade's personality on the firm was felt long after his death. Early in his career he developed strategies and philosophies which he eventually passed on to his heirs in the firm. The result was an uncommonly long-lived and successful mercantile dynasty in the notoriously volatile Newfoundland trade.

A central question of this thesis regards the degree to which Slade's experiences in Newfoundland can be considered typical of Newfoundland merchants. Slade had an atypical operation, especially in terms of his diversified staple extraction, but he was not a radically different merchant as compared to his counterparts in other parts of Newfoundland. The merchants in the Newfoundland trade all followed similarly "safe" business strategies, but John Slade was more innovative than the norm, at least during his early years at Fogo. Slade's uniqueness was probably responsible for the particular longevity of his Newfoundland business dynasty.

Analysis of the data from the ledgers leads to some conclusions which, although they do not shake the very foundations of Newfoundland historiography, are certainly important and bring us closer to an understanding of the lives and careers of Newfoundland planters at the end of the eighteenth century. The image of planters which has been presented in this thesis, however, is an imperfect one. Many questions arise out of the findings, and they can not all be dealt with in this thesis. In this thesis there has been given impressions of the material existence of planters at Fogo, and how this aspect of their lives evolved over the sample period.

In the early years of the sample period the planters engaged in diverse production. Although the cod fishery was always the pre-eminant pursuit, other activities, such as trapping and the production of various wood products, were important sources of income in the mid 1780's. As the years wore on, the seal fishery grew into a place of importance

alongside the cod fishery, but it waned in importance by the time twenty years had elapsed. While the seal fishery and other products were always important economic adjuncts, the planters generally became cod fishing "specialists" after twenty years.

Over the twenty-year span, the planters' consumption changed along with their production. The amount of money spent on equipment for the fishery grew over the years as planters deserted other pursuits and concentrated on the cod fishery. Consumption of household goods rose marginally through the years as families and homes were improved. Consumption of store-bought foodstuffs declined over the twenty years as the planters became more familiar with their surroundings and both hunted more efficiently and planted important kitchen gardens. Agriculture was always at a less than subsistence level. Planters gained freedom from Slade when they developed these alternative food sources. As families grew, expenditures on clothing grew marginally.

Findings in regard to the Slade truck system may help historians re-evaluate their view of this trade system. Debt, often cited as the controlling factor in the truck system, existed at Fogo but it was not as oppressive in the area and period under study as might be expected. Many planters went through long periods without any debt, and there was a general trend from indebtedness to surplus exhibited by planters over the twenty year period. Under the Slade truck system, planters were able to achieve a degree of economic flexibility and autonomy. They were certainly not the hapless victims of an all-powerful merchant.

The Slade-sponsored economic system at Fogo was not a closed one. There were mercantile alternatives to Slade, though he was the chief mercantile contact for the sample planters. As planters became more established over time, they likely developed alternative means for disposing of their products. Large shipowners residing at Fogo dealt directly with St. John's, and they may have become a sort of middlemen for some of their Fogo neighbours, especially if they could fetch better prices at St. John's than Slade was offering.

Although there is no evidence in the Slade papers of a large-scale, intricate internal economy at Fogo, some of the evidence, such as specialization by some planters in certain types of production, points to an informal exchange system within the island, independent of Slade, which gave planters more freedom and flexibility. More research is necessary in this area.

It became quite clear from the data that Fogo was not a homogeneous agglomeration of fishermen and planters all operating under the terms imposed by Slade. In fact, it is reasonable to propose a three-tiered society with Slade on top, the successful planters in the middle, and servants, new arrivals, weak planters, and assorted drifters forming the bottom tier. This last group was certainly the largest of the three. The planters studied in this thesis may have been middlemen who, although they were themselves engaged in the primary labour of fishing and trapping, were also able to grow and prosper within the truck system. They were certainly not the partners of Slade, but they were appendages of his firm, benefitting from the Slade truck system and

demonstrating clear economic self-determination.

There is a need for historians of Newfoundland to study the non-merchant fishing masses with more of an openness to the possibility of social stratification within the fishing communities. The Slade ledgers indicate that in Notre Dame Bay there existed varying levels of economic involvement and success. Exactly what these different strata were and how they interrelated will require further research.

Through an examination of the statistical evidence gleaned from the ledgers, the effect of international conflict on planters and merchants at Fogo was revealed. The international repercussions of the French Revolution slowed down fisheries returns as labour became scarce and shipping became hazardous. The Napoleonic Wars had similar yet less severe effects on the fisheries. Strangely, Fogo planters in positions of surplus before the wars were able to increase their surpluses with Slade during wartime. Higher commodity prices allowed these planters to increase their profits.

Through Slade's own experience over the twenty years, it was seen how the growing resident population replaced indentured servants as the labourers in the fisheries. The percentage of servants used by Slade declined over the twenty years. This was proof of the changes which the Newfoundland economy and society underwent during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

* * * *

The Newfoundland trade, which Ralph Lounsbury called,

in 1934, an "obscure and little understood phase of British overseas enterprise," is slowly being deciphered by Newfoundland historians. The goal of researchers is to understand the motivations of the men who lived and worked in this barren and inhospitable land. Newfoundland history is a string of anomalies, a chronicle of misadventure, exploitation, bravery, and in the case of the Beothuck Indians, extinction.

For anyone who has ever walked along the coast of Fogo, or spent a day fishing off Tilting, or walked the old abandoned premises of Slade in Fogo town, or spent an evening talking and drinking with local fishermen, or prayed in a Fogo Island church, this thesis may be a welcome but frustratingly inadequate attempt to understand the origins of that strange, beautiful, warm place.

May they take solace in the pledge that it is only a beginning.

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APPENDIX ONE

ANNUAL COMMODITY PRICES

1783 - 1816

Annual Commodity Prices, 1783 - 1816

Year	Production				
	Qtl fish	Tr Oil	Seals	Sl Oil	TrcSalmon
1783	0.12.0	17.0	0.6.6	20.0	0.40.0
1784	0.12.0	18.0	0.6.6	18.10	0.40.0
1785	0.12.0	18.0	-	19.0	0.40.0
1786	0.12.0	15.0	0.5.10	18.10	0.40.0
1787	0.12.0	17.0	0.5.0	17.0	0.40.0
1788	0.12.0	15.0	0.2.6	16.0	0.40.0
1789	0.11.0	15.0	0.2.6	14.0	0.40.0
1790	0.12.6	15.0	0.2.6	16.0	0.40.0
1791	0.12.6	15.0	0.3.0	16.0	0.30.0
1792	0.13.0	15.0	0.2.6	18.0	0.40.0
1793	0.13.0	18.0	0.4.0	18.0	0.35.0
1794	0.13.0	18.0	0.3.0	16.0	0.30.0
1795	-	-	0.3.0	-	-
1796	0.17.6	20.0	0.4.0	21.0	0.35.0
1797	0.12.0	19.0	0.3.6	18.0	0.35.0
1798	0.10.0	18.0	0.3.6	18.0	0.35.0
1799	0.11.0	20.0	0.3.6	20.0	0.30.0
1800	0.13.6	21.0	0.3.6	21.0	0.40.0
1801	-	-	-	-	-
1802	0.20.0	21.0	0.3.0	21.0	0.65.0
1803	0.12.6	20.0	0.3.0	22.0	0.40.0
1804	0.14.0	23.0	0.4.0	23.10	0.55.0
1805	0.12.9	22.0	0.6.0	22.0	0.55.0
1806	0.12.2	18.0	0.6.0	20.0	0.55.0
1807	0.12.0	16.0	0.4.6	17.0	0.60.0
1808	0.12.6	18.0	0.3.0	16.0	0.60.0
1809	-	-	-	-	-
1810	-	-	-	-	-
1811	-	-	-	-	-
1812	0.20.0	24.0	0.4.0	23.0	0.55.0
1813	0.26.0	27.0	0.3.6	26.0	0.60.0
1814	0.22.6	25.0	0.3.0	27.0	0.65.0
1815	0.19.0	23.0	0.4.0	24.0	none
1816	0.12.0	17.6	0.2.0	17.10	none

Source: Slade Ledgers, 1783 - 1816

KEY: Qtl fish = Quintal of fish
Tr Oil = Train Oil (Cod Oil)
Seals = Seal Skins
Sl Oil = Seal Oil
Trc Salmon = Tierce of Salmon

Continued on next page.

Consumption

	Hh Salt	Qt Rum	Brl Pork	Cwt Bread	Cwt Flour	Shoes	Year
1783	-	none	4.0.0	0.28.0	-	-	1783
1784	0.20.0	none	4.0.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	0.8.0	1784
1785	0.21.0	none	5.0.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	0.10.0	1785
1786	0.17.0	0.1.6	5.0.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	0.10.0	1786
1787	0.16.0	0.2.0	5.0.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	0.10.0	1787
1788	0.16.0	0.2.0	4.10.0	0.26.0	0.28.0	0.10.0	1788
1789	0.16.0	0.2.0	4.10.0	0.25.0	0.25.0	0.8.0	1789
1790	0.16.0	0.2.0	4.10.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	0.10.0	1790
1791	0.16.0	0.2.0	4.10.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	-	1791
1792	0.16.0	0.2.0	4.10.0	0.28.0	0.28.0	0.8.0	1792
1793	0.16.0	0.1.6	5.0.0	0.28.0	0.25.0	0.8.0	1793
1794	0.16.0	0.1.6	5.0.0	0.30.0	0.30.0	0.10.0	1794
1795	-	0.2.6	-	0.30.0	0.30.0	0.10.0	1795
1796	0.20.0	0.2.6	6.0.0	0.32.0	0.37.0	0.8.0	1796
1797	0.25.0	0.3.0	7.0.0	0.32.0	0.30.0	0.8.0	1797
1798	0.25.0	0.3.0	7.0.0	0.30.0	0.30.0	0.8.0	1798
1799	0.26.0	0.3.0	6.0.0	0.28.0	0.30.0	0.9.0	1799
1800	0.28.0	0.2.6	6.0.0	0.45.0	0.45.0	0.10.0	1800
1801	-	-	9.0.0	0.40.0	-	-	1801
1802	0.18.0	0.3.0	6.10.0	0.25.0	-	-	1802
1803	0.22.0	0.3.0	6.10.0	0.25.0	0.16.0	0.7.0	1803
1804	0.18.0	0.2.0	6.0.0	0.30.0	0.29.0	0.12.0	1804
1805	0.20.0	0.2.0	6.0.0	0.45.0	0.45.0	0.12.0	1805
1806	0.18.0	0.2.0	7.10.0	0.40.0	0.40.0	0.10.0	1806
1807	0.20.0	0.2.6	7.0.0	0.42.0	0.41.0	0.7.0	1807
1808	0.18.0	0.1.6	7.0.0	0.38.0	n/a	0.10.6	1808
1809	-	-	-	-	-	-	1809
1810	-	-	-	-	-	-	1810
1811	-	-	-	-	-	-	1811
1812	0.18.0	0.2.0	6.10.0	0.60.0	0.64.0	0.10.0	1812
1813	0.25.0	0.2.6	10.10.0	0.80.0	0.32.0	0.10.6	1813
1814	0.45.0	0.2.6	9.9.0	0.70.0	0.45.0	0.10.6	1814
1815	0.19.0	0.2.6	7.7.0	0.35.0	0.35.0	0.11.0	1815
1816	0.16.0	0.2.0	5.5.0	0.30.0	0.35.0	0.10.6	1816

KEY:

Hh Salt = Hogshead of Salt
Qt Rum = Quart of Rum
Brl Pork = Barrel of Pork
Cwt Bread = Hundredweight of Bread
Cwt Flour = Hundredweight of Flour
Shoes = Shoes

APPENDIX TWO

THE SAMPLE PLANTERS

Name	Nationality
Daniel Bryan	Irish
Timothy Dwyer	Irish
Henry Emberly	English
Benjamin Gates	English
Hezekiah Guy	English
Edward Kennedy	Irish
Thomas Riggs	English
George Rowsell Jr.	English
James Skinner	English
Richard Stuckless	English
John Wilkins	English
Phillip Adams	English
William Brown	English
Thomas Every	English
Charles Hellings	English
Samuel Jacobs	English
John Moors	English
Bazil Osmand	English
William Rawlins	English
Jeremiah Riggs	English
James Snow	English
William Young	English
William Adey	English
John Burt	English
Robert Guy	English
John Irish	English
Joseph Oake	English
Isaac Randle	English
Robert Ridout	English
George Rowsell Sr.	English
John White	English
John Wiseman	English

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