

## POINT LANCE: A NEWFOUNDLAND OUTPORT

Point Lance, a typical Newfoundland Irish outport community, is located on the south-western corner of the Avalon Peninsula. It was first settled around 1825 by two brothers, Philip and Edward Careen, immigrants from south-east Ireland. Hundreds of similar settlements were formed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some were exclusively or predominantly Protestant English; others were Catholic Irish; many were mixed.

The Careens initially chose farming in as unpromising an environment as one could find in comparable latitudes on either side of the Atlantic. But it permitted a commercial pastoral and subsistence arable economy where some skills from home could be adapted. The crucial difference between small holdings along the Comeragh foothills in west Waterford, for example, and Point Lance was the sea and its riches. Once they developed it, the cod economy allowed the Careens to subdivide their land at will and use it as a base to harvest the fishing grounds nearby. The process of settlement expansion evident in their rural homeland before the

Famine was rejuvenated on the maritime frontier. There were few settlements quite like Point Lance in post-Famine south-east Ireland, and none at all by 1950.

The demographic pattern in Point Lance was replicated in hundreds of outports around Newfoundland's coast as population soared. Through inheritance that was partible and patrilineal, kin-centred settlement clusters evolved, similar to but generally larger than the average Irish clachan. On both islands the morphology of such settlements appears loose and haphazard in contrast to the orderly layout of farms and townships over rural North America. The apparent disorder in Point Lance is deceptive; a strictly organised kinship and social network underpinned the settlement layout. These outports were not unique in their formation. Their creation was a consequence initially of transatlantic migration, in this case an Irish diaspora that had as much in common with Irish movements to mainland North America as it had differences. Point Lance is one expression of that profound and diverse experience.



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Fig. 1 Point Lance in 1972. It nestles at the foot of a steep slope on the western edge of a broad valley drained by a river and a brook. The homesteads, and church are located on slightly elevated sites west of Conway's Brook. Pastures and meadowland occupy much of the valley, surrounded by the open commons or barrens, a rolling largely treeless terrain covered with dark-brown moss heath underlain by bog.

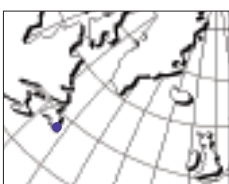




Fig. 2 The topography of Point Lance is defined by a shingle beach 1.6km long, backed by a plain just above sea level extending 1.6km or more inland. Known as 'The Barrens', it is a vast featureless plateau of scattered shrub and dark-brown heath moss, underlain by blanket bog. Patches of stunted spruce and balsam fir are found in sheltered pockets. Two ridges, over 75m in height, skirt the valley and both ridges jut out into the Atlantic to form a picturesque south-facing cove. North of the flats, a more gradual relief marks the interior upland terrain.

**ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES**

Glacial till covers the undulating slopes and ridges surrounding the plain. The resulting soils on both slopes and plain were shallow, immature and poor, ranging from a few centimetres to one metre in depth. Coarse in texture, these meagre soils are highly acidic, leached and stony. Inadequate natural drainage generated small pockets of standing water and marshland unsuitable for cultivation. Drainage is freer on the slopes where the mineral soils were good enough to support cultivation. The valley floor or flats is largely covered by marine deposits, notably clay, silt, sand and gravel.

Climate imposed further restrictions on agriculture. Vegetative growth is limited to only 140 days a year. By North American standards, summers are short, moist and cool. Growth is minimal until late May and frost returns by late October. High precipitation, fog, cloud, restricted



Fig. 3 Land forms and surface geology. The physical geography of Point Lance derives from geomorphological and marine processes. Ocean wave action smeared sand, gravel, silt and clay over the entire valley floor (or flats). Land forms, including beach ridges, sand bars, terraces and deltas, are derived from this marine assault.



GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND LANDS, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Fig. 4 Point Lance in 1966 . The site of the pioneer farmstead (A) is shown . Settlement spread northeast, eventually crossing Conway's Brook. Some traditional gardens and meadows are now the sites of modern houses. Point Lance today is a hamlet of over forty households. Until 1950, everyone born there was a direct descendant of Philip Careen. Over four generations, sons inherited a share of their father's property, married, and set up independent households. Careen daughters married mainly into adjacent settlements and relocated there.

evaporation and low temperatures combined to exclude grain cultivation and restrict arable produce to cool-weather vegetables, notably turnip, cabbage and particularly potato. Wild grasses (bent, fescue) provided natural pastures along the river and brook (as well as their tributary streams) and around small ponds and wetlands devoid of shrub.

Point Lance, which began as a pastoral farm, was one of a dozen such settlements on the peninsula, sited at the head of an ice-scoured, stream-eroded valley. Unlike most European immigrants in pioneer settings in eastern Canada, the Careens were not initially confronted by a formidable coniferous forest. Patches of low alder and willow scrub dotted the valley floor. Balsam fir and black spruce grew further up the slopes, and in the more sheltered inland valleys. They were used extensively for local construction, and for fuel. Elsewhere on this exposed and wind-swept headland, the characteristic landscape was a moderately rolling upland or plateau, rarely 90m above sea level. Two kilometres south of the beach and hamlet lay the fishing grounds, teeming with cod each

summer. This primary resource was ignored for the first two decades of settlement, but it became the core of Point Lance's traditional economy thereafter.

#### NEWFOUNDLAND: THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Newfoundland is unique in North America in that it was the first place on the continent to be exploited regularly by Europeans. Following its rediscovery by Cabot in 1497 – the Norse had settled temporarily some five centuries before – Portuguese, French Basques, Bretons and Normans amongst others arrived in numbers each spring to prosecute the lucrative cod fishery. By 1520 Spanish Basques were hunting whales along the Labrador coast. The continental Europeans were followed after 1575 by the English, largely from the ports and hinterlands of the West Country. Throughout the sixteenth century, it was a migratory fishery only. At the end of the season, everybody just went home.

After 1600 the English began to settle, forming tiny communities all along the eastern shore. They were joined a century later by the Irish. Like the English, the Irish



TERRY MURPHY / WATERFORD MUSEUM OF TREASURES



THE ROOMS PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

Fig. 5 A) Blenheim Lodge in the townland of Ballymaclode, parish of Ballygunner, was acquired by Pierce Sweetman in 1810 with a demesne of thirty acres. Located on the south bank of the Suir six kilometres downstream from his premises on the quay of Waterford, with a commanding view of the river and its traffic, Blenheim was an ideal location for a ship-owning merchant in the Newfoundland passenger and provisions trade. It remained the chief Sweetman residence until 1850. B) Blenheim House in Placentia was built shortly after the arrival in 1813 of Roger Forristall Sweetman, the son of Pierce. It was an architectural replica of the Waterford Blenheim, but built in wood. Roger Sweetman was the great grandson of Richard Welsh, who is buried in the Anglican cemetery close by. No Irish-Newfoundland mercantile family had such deep-rooted and enduring links with their homeland. Blenheim and its extensive merchant premises on the Placentia waterfront were built on properties acquired by Richard Welsh between 1750-1770. Blenheim House remained the family home until its demolition c.1940.

migrations to Newfoundland were unique in that no other province in Canada or state in America drew its migrants and immigrants from so geographically focused a source area in the homeland, and over so sustained a period. Beginning before 1700 and continuing past 1850, the great bulk of the Irish came from Waterford and its hinterland, notably south-west Wexford, south Carlow, south Kilkenny, county Waterford, south-east Tipperary, and south-east Cork. New Ross and Youghal were secondary ports of embarkation.

#### TRANSATLANTIC MIGRATION: THE CAREENS IN CONTEXT

Like most immigrants settling along the Cape Shore south of Placentia, the Careen brothers were brought over by the Sweetmans, a major merchant family long-established in the Waterford-Placentia passenger and provisions trade. By 1820, this transatlantic commerce was more than a century old. It was organised initially by merchants and ship owners in Bristol and north Devon, notably the small ports of Bideford, Barnstaple, and Appledore. Following the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), and the ceding of Newfoundland's south coast by the French to the British, Placentia became the focus of an English cod fishery. Shipmasters from north Devon began calling to ports on Ireland's south coast, particularly Waterford, for salt provisions and servants. In 1720, an English naval officer noted:

There are not above ten French residents in St. Peter's, St. Lawrence and Placentia who...are

supplied with craft and servants from England, but here are brought over every year by the Bristol, Bideford and Barnstable ships great numbers of Irish Roman Catholic servants who all settle to the southwards in our plantations.

After 1750 Irish merchants entered the trade on their own account. Richard Welsh of New Ross settled in Placentia in 1734, working initially as a clerk and agent for a north Devon merchant house. By 1754 Welsh had prospered into a leading merchant in Placentia, founding a trading house that endured for more than a century. One of his three daughters, Catharine, born and raised in Placentia, married Roger Sweetman of Newbawn, County Wexford, a big farmer. Their son, Pierce, moved to Placentia in 1785 initially as an agent and then as company manager. Between 1785-1835 the Sweetmans hired hundreds of young Irish male servants and artisans to prosecute the cod fishery at Placentia and around the bay. Typically these migrants were recruited on contract in Waterford for a season or two to work for the company or for a planter. Until 1790 the great majority of migrants returned home. Thereafter they stayed. Seasonal migration was replaced by emigration.

Philip Careen is first recorded in the Sweetman ledgers in 1819. According to tradition, he and his brother began life in Newfoundland working as shoremen in Placentia or in a harbour nearby. Shoremen were largely responsible for landing and processing the fish. They were generally

the poorest paid personnel in the fishery, beginning as inexperienced youngsters for ten pounds a season. Much of their work involved turning fish on the flakes or beach until dry, stacking it, and finally storing it in warehouses for shipment.

The harsh winters were spent in the woods cutting timber and hauling it to the settlements to build or repair shore structures, notably wharves, stores, flakes, houses, boats and ships. Great quantities were consumed for fuel. Able shoremen normally progressed to skilled work ashore as splitters, salters, coopers, carpenters and boat builders. Their wages ranged from twenty to thirty pounds a season. Others moved to the boats (shallops), and became skilled fishermen.

Most Irish migrants to Newfoundland were from an agricultural background, the sons of small farmers, cottiers or farm labourers. The Careens were funded by the Sweetmans to create a cattle farm at Point Lance. The natural grasslands along its streams had already been used as summer pastures by Irish settlers nearby, notably the Conways of Distress Cove (St. Brides) after whose surname the main brook in Point Lance is named. Here was a pastoral economy with deep roots in the homeland, particularly in the marginal hill country of eighteenth-century west Waterford whence the Careens likely came.

Food lies at the core of the Newfoundland experience. It permeates salient themes of the island's historical geography: migration, commerce, colonisation, settlement, adaptation, ecology, landscape, livelihood, tradition, and social class. At first glance it appears paradoxical that Newfoundland, a huge island in the North Atlantic located as far south as France, and a major exporter of high-protein food in the form of dried and salted cod, should require substantial imports of foodstuffs to survive. Yet such was the case since the advent of the first Europeans after 1500.

Fishermen could not survive on cod alone but a combination of environmental and economic conditions precluded or curtailed other forms of local food production. The island's thin soils, rocky terrain and short growing season discouraged commercial farming. Richard Welsh depended heavily on overseas regions for foodstuffs to provision his extensive fishery at Placentia. Waterford and New Ross, with their flourishing mercantile communities, were important sources not just of labour, but for salt pork, beef and butter, essential items in the dietary regime of the migrants and inhabitants whom he employed or supplied.

Despite a harsh physical geography, some Irish in Placentia Bay did establish commercial farms. Provisions

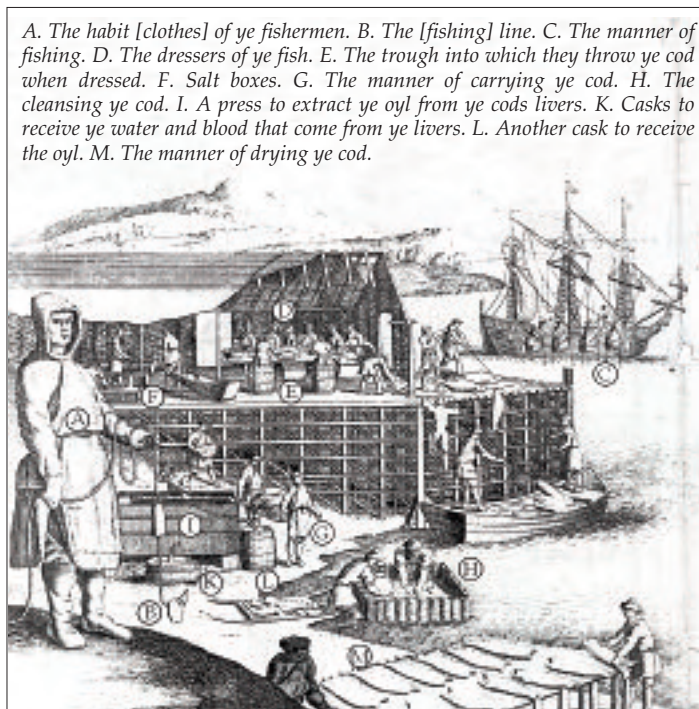


Fig. 6 'A view of a stage & also of ye manner of fishing for, curing & drying cod at Newfoundland'. The original image by Nicholas de Fer dates from 1698, and was later adapted by Duhamel Du Monceau. This iconic scene of a transatlantic mercantile fishery was similar to that conducted by Richard Welsh in Placentia. The cod, usually caught from shallops, were landed at the stagehead: shoremen then passed them indoors to headers, splitters, and finally salters who stacked them between layers of salt. Later the cod were washed, then spread to dry on flakes or (particularly in Placentia), on the extensive cobbled beaches there. Although largely replaced by a planter or family fishery by 1790, Roger Sweetman was still running a merchant-based operation involving large numbers of men when the Careens arrived.

imported from distant regions around the north Atlantic were expensive, and from the outset merchants and planters sought to reduce the costs of victualling. Richard Welsh himself took over a farm at Bruley, one mile south of the harbour of Placentia, and it remained in the possession of his successors the Sweetmans until recently. Roger Forristal Sweetman established other farms after 1820, most notably at Big Barrisway, on the Cape Shore, and at Point Lance.

Transatlantic migration was largely a movement in search of better wages and, increasingly after 1790, the prospect of property and full ownership. These were powerful motivations for the Careens and their fellow migrants. Wages for young farm labourers in south-east Ireland in 1815 rarely exceeded a paltry five pounds a year. A cottier-labourer could add a house and one acre, but had to pay a rent of two pounds or more per annum. The Newfoundland fishery doubled or tripled those wages for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Within five years an Irish servant could set up on his own account, acquire a fishing property, or less frequently a farm, build a house,

manufacture and purchase the requisite technology, marry, and settle down. The Careens of Point Lance fit this model, and their Newfoundland experience was typical of thousands of Irish immigrants peopling the island over the course of a century.

#### COLONISATION AND SETTLEMENT: POINT LANCE IN CONTEXT

Family settlement in Great and Little Placentia, and a handful of harbours nearby, was established by English and Irish through the eighteenth century. Following the decline of the transatlantic migratory fishery after 1790, a host of sites or coves less favoured for landing fish, but with more potential for farming and winter logging, were occupied by the Irish in Placentia and St. Mary's bays. Red Island and Rams Islands marked the northern limits of prominent Irish Catholic settlement in eastern Placentia Bay. They also coincided with the margins of the Sweetman's trading territory. South of Placentia, between Point Verde and Beckford, more than fifty families were recorded in 1836. All three hundred inhabitants were Catholic, almost exclusively of Irish birth or descent. St. Mary's Bay was also overwhelmingly of Irish origins. Point Lance was situated in the middle of one of the most distinctively Irish Catholic culture areas in rural Canada.

The Careens settled in Newfoundland after the Napoleonic wars. Economic conditions in south-east Ireland had worsened. The population had been accelerating for a generation or more. Access to land and livelihoods was squeezed, particularly for the young. Small holdings were sometimes reduced to uneconomic units of ten acres or fewer through subdivision. In almost every rural parish, even in the south-east, one of Ireland's more favoured regions, the cottier population swelled. Towns were glutted with unskilled labourers seeking work and sustenance. A post-war recession in farm prices and markets, and the collapse of industries such as textiles, increased unemployment.

Newfoundland's fishery also suffered a post-war recession as foreign markets faltered and cod prices dropped. So did servants' wages. But Newfoundland was still a vast underpopulated island in 1820 with hundreds of unsettled coves and thinly settled harbours offering opportunities. Such opportunity had virtually vanished in the Irish homeland of the Careens. For most Irish, movement to Newfoundland was a movement from unemployment or underemployment and low wages to better work and higher wages. The great majority of immigrants arriving after 1815 stayed. There was enough to give them a foothold, build an economy, marry and settle down.



Fig. 7 The population of south-west Avalon in 1857. There were 415 families and 2,554 inhabitants in twenty-six separate communities between Red Island and Beckford in 1857. All but seventeen were Catholics. The population had more than doubled since 1836, a consequence of local natural increase rather than in-migration or immigration. By 1857 only ten per cent were immigrants, almost all natives of Ireland. Distress and Branch excepted, the settlements south of Point Verde were tiny, each with three or fewer houses. Point Lance and its neighbours, Gull Cove and Golden Bay, each had one house only. It was a thinly settled and isolated shore.

#### PATTERNS OF MARRIAGE AND THE GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT

Social isolation in Point Lance and its neighbouring coves was slowly offset by local marriages and family formation over the generations. Philip Careen married Anne Viscount of Red Island where, according to tradition, he and his brother worked for a while prior to settling in Point Lance. Philip's bride was a native Newfoundlander, frequently the case for the marriages of male immigrants out from Ireland. Female migration from the homeland to Newfoundland was small when compared to that of single young men. In contrast to the general Irish diaspora, family migration involving children hardly ever occurred. Anne Viscount was likely the granddaughter of a trader or clerk from Jersey, Philip Levisconte, who settled in Burin around 1765. By 1800 there were several Viscount families in Placentia Bay centred at Merasheen, near Red Island. While the original pioneer was probably Protestant and French-speaking, his descendants were all Catholic and spoke English only. Nothing is known of

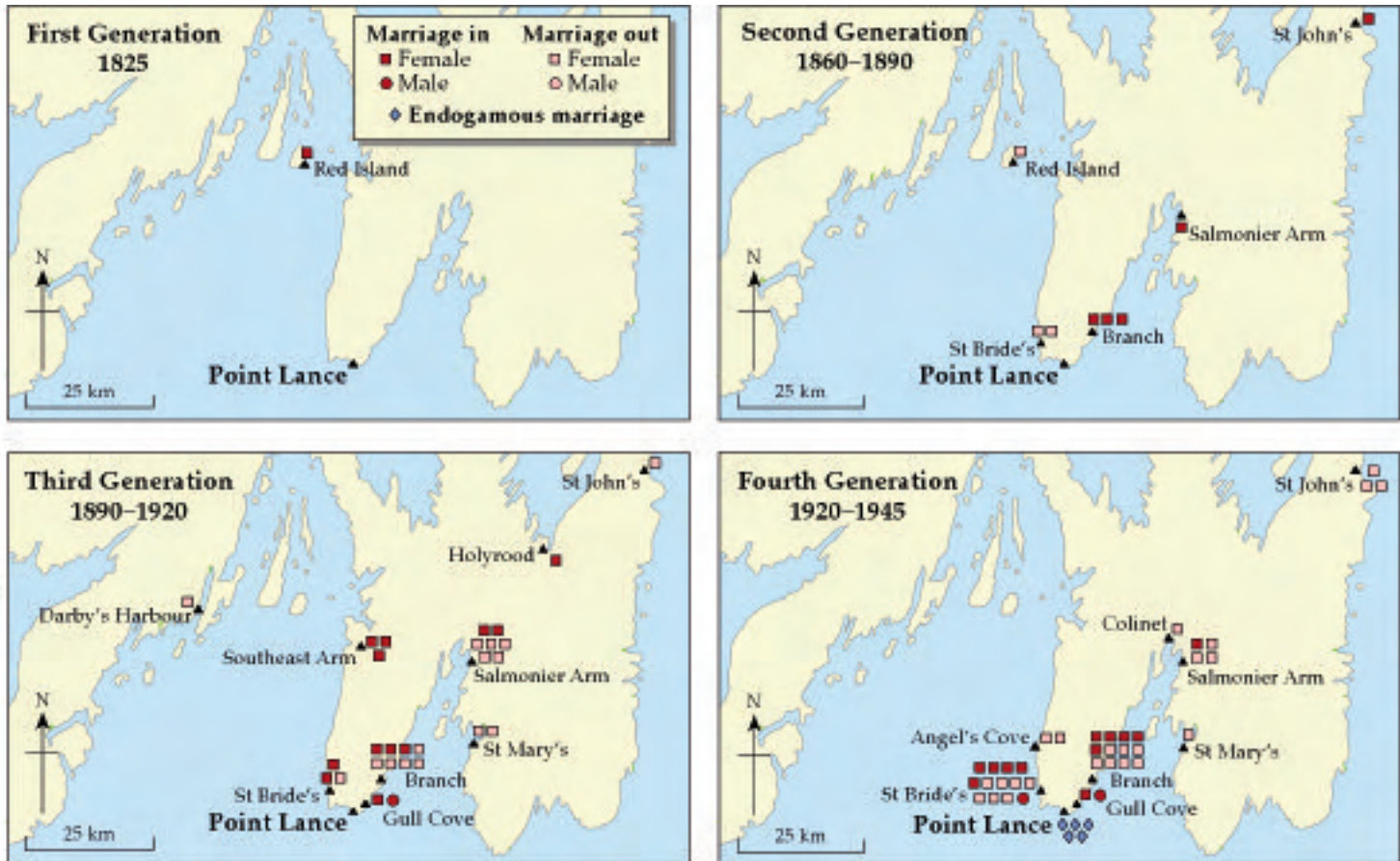


Fig. 8 The Marriage Field. Marriage migration was composed almost entirely of women marrying into and out of Point Lance. The marriage field was confined to a few hours journey – and rarely more than a day – from the community. Brides came from and went to places where the Careens traditionally visited socially, or where they traveled to and traded. Marriages in Point Lance were romantic rather than mercenary. The initiative in choosing a mate was assumed by the spouses themselves. Unless they were of planter status or otherwise middle class, daughters did not receive dowries.

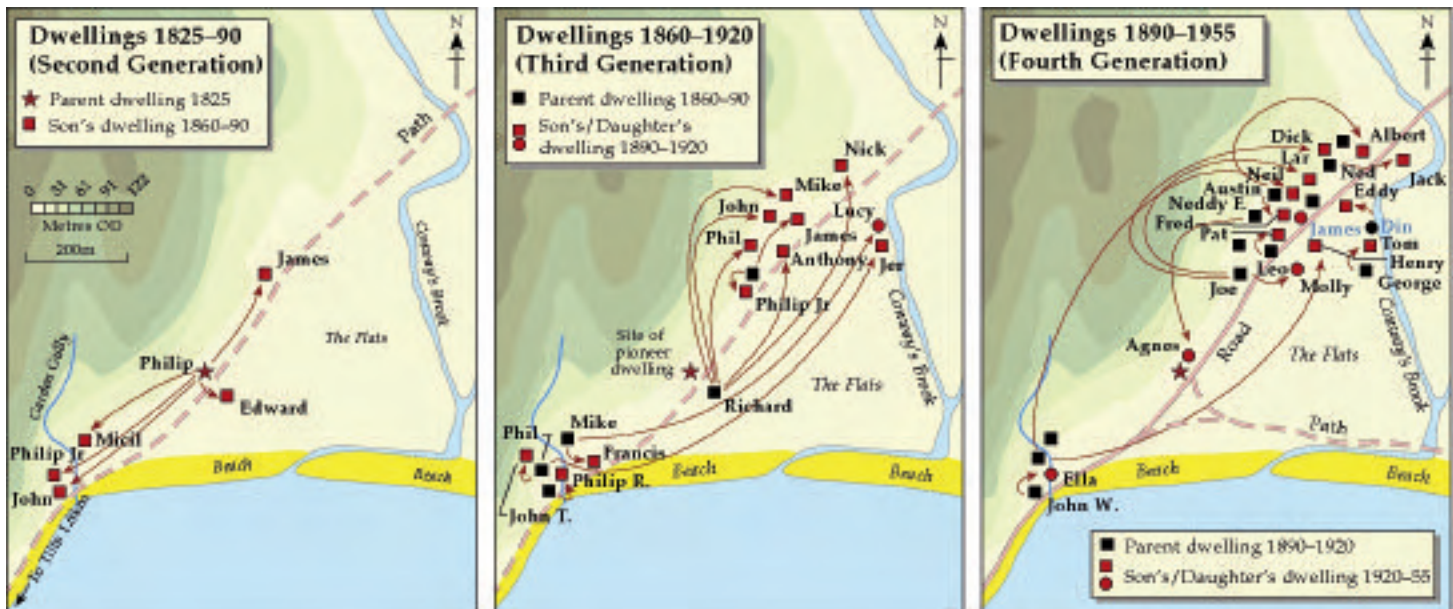


Fig. 9 Kinship and settlement. The evolution of settlement was dominated by a pattern of inheritance that was partible and patrilineal. Five of Philip Careen's sons chose or were allocated house sites near the ancestral home, and roughly equal shares of all improved land on the flats. Richard, the eldest, who remained single, lived with his parents. Edward located just across the path from the ancestral farmstead. James moved 'upalong', which became the nucleus for the third and fourth generations. Three sons located 'downalong' by the Old Garden closer to the fishing room. Three of the five wives (English, Power and Nash) were from leading (and related) families in Branch, intensifying kinship ties. In the fourth generation, two non-Careen males were absorbed into Point Lance – Din McGrath and James Nash (shown in blue). Both had Careen mothers.

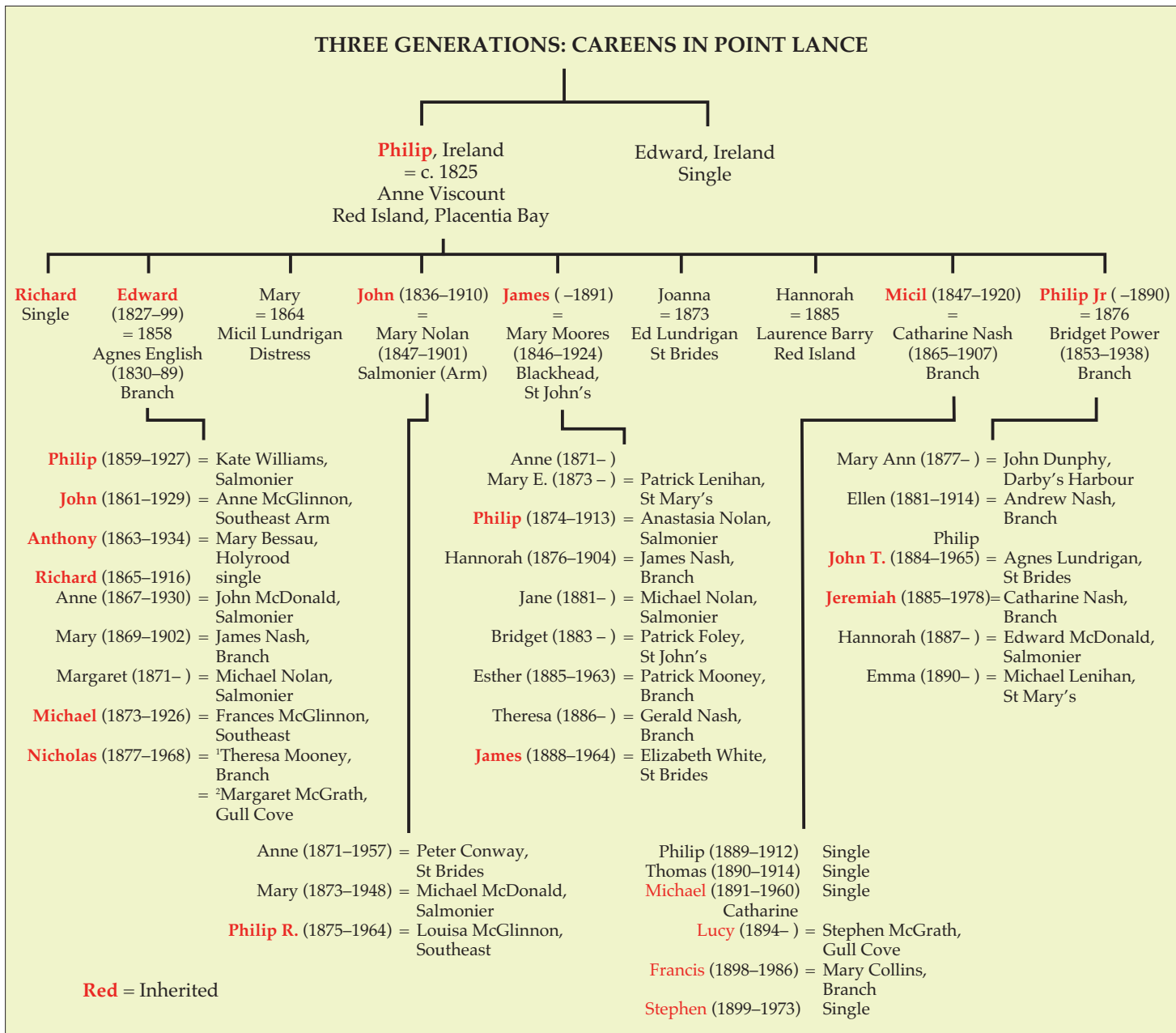


Fig. 10 Three generations of the Careen family. Genealogy and kinship formed the bedrock of Point Lance culture upon which all fundamental social and economic relationships were based. There were nine children in the second generation, an average of nine in the third generation, eight in the fourth and nine in the fifth. There are 37 spouses listed over the three generations. Apart from Viscount and Bessau (both Jersey) and Moores (English), all were Irish. There are only three distinctively English first names, Esther and Jane, daughters of Mary Moores, and Emma, evidence of modernisation.

Almost all sons married, bringing their wives primarily from nearby settlements to the community where each new couple established a household. The vast majority of offspring stemmed from the male line. No Careen male left Point Lance permanently until after 1950. Every Careen girl, by contrast, departed on marriage, relocating in their husbands' settlements. This continued until the fourth generation, when some Careen daughters married second cousins in Point Lance, and stayed. For four generations most Point Lancers found their spouses in adjacent outports, especially in Branch and St. Brides, the most

populous places on the shore. Once an alliance was forged with an outport, others followed. In tiny places proximate to Point Lance, in Golden Bay, Lears Cove, and Beckford, for example, potential spouses were few. Commercial circuits brought Point Lancers into contact with places further away. The marriage field was extended along the old cattle droving route to Placentia, Colinet, Salmonier, Holyrood and St. John's. Pioneer kinship links with the Viscounts led to further marriages in Red Island and Darby's Harbour, along the fringes of inner Placentia Bay. North of this zone were the Anglican English.



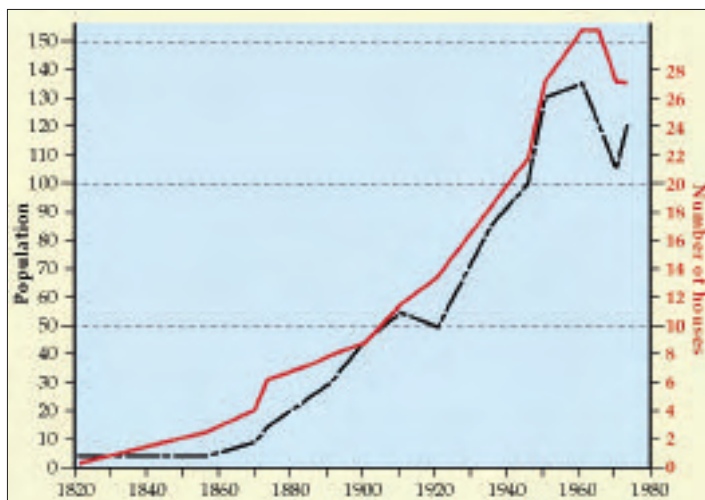


Fig. 11 Over four generations, the population of Point Lance increased from 9 to 36 to 76 to 126 and the number of houses from 1 to 5 to 13 to 18. Demographic growth was governed by subdivision of ancestral properties amongst all sons, ample land for further clearing, ubiquitous marriage, large families and the absence of any outmigration of sons until after 1950.

Apart from a small group in Placentia, society in Point Lance and the south-western Avalon was overwhelmingly egalitarian and settlements were institutionally simple. All were fishermen-farmers, primary producers, with little occupational specialisation. Class was hardly of relevance in spouse selection. Daughters, however, were considered less economically useful than sons in a traditional commercial economy where patriarchal values ruled. They were encouraged to marry early. Visiting in-laws was common, and new wives brought fresh ideas, helping in the process of cultural integration and homogenisation throughout the region. From 1850 onwards, the vast majority of inhabitants were native Newfoundlanders. Detailed knowledge of particular places of origin in south-east Ireland faded. From a culturally diverse migrant and immigrant population base, a new identity was forged.

One of the keys to the growth of settlement in Point Lance and neighbouring coves was the consistently large families and the subdivision of ancestral properties amongst sons over the generations. Philip and Anne Careen had six sons and three daughters. All sons inherited a share of their parents' patrimony. Five married and established households near the ancestral homestead. There were thirty-six children in the third generation, seventy-six in the fourth, and one hundred and twenty-six in the fifth. Large families reflected more than simply a religious ethos. The nuclear family was the basic unit of economic production. Children, especially boys, were employed in the household economy from a very early age. Under the traditional regime of a simple, manual technology, the larger the family, the more economic muscle the head of household commanded. Girls,

moreover, tended to marry young, thereby increasing the possibility of large families. Point Lance's population grew apace until 1966 and the beginnings of outmigration.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ANNUAL ROUND

Largely unrestricted access to the resources of land and sea was central in the social as well as economic evolution of Point Lance. It was the goal of all Point Lance households to become as self-sufficient as possible as soon as possible, and to produce a surplus for sale. Physical isolation induced a remarkably diversified and complex annual round of economic activities. Cattle, horses, sheep and pigs were raised on the land, together with domesticated ducks, geese and hens; potatoes, turnips, cabbages, oats, hay and a variety of other vegetables and fruits were planted; cod, capelin and kelp were taken from the sea; foxes, muskrat, rabbits and caribou were trapped or hunted inland; eider ducks, shags, loons, turrees and other seafood, as well as partridges, were shot; bakeapples, blueberries, partridgeberries and cranberries were gathered in the uplands; natural grasses and meadows along the river, brook, their tributary streams

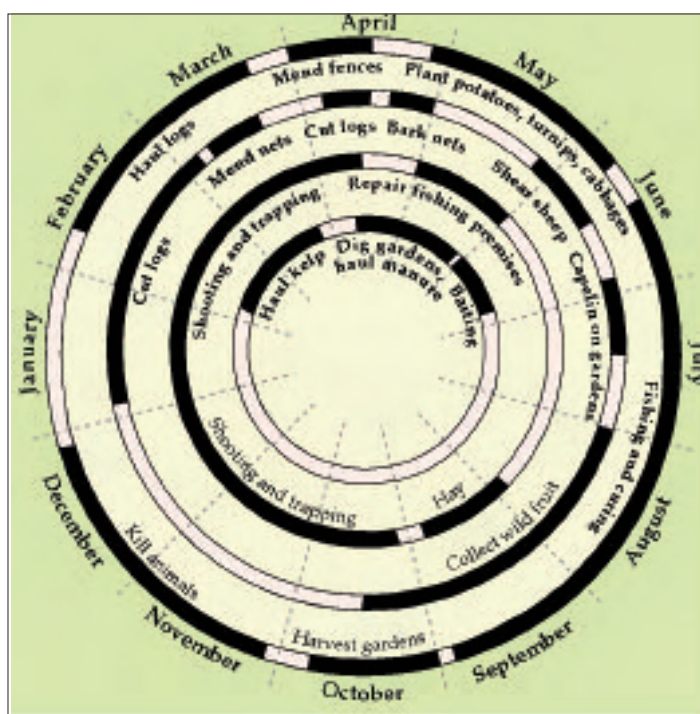


Fig. 12 Natural resources and the annual round. In the largely subsistence world of the outport, isolated from sources of supply, Point Lancers developed a complex yearly round of economic activities. Resources were spatially segregated and seasonally accessible. Winters were spent cutting and hauling out timber from the woods, shooting wild birds along the coast and out on the ocean, and trapping inland. Nets were made or mended, houses and outbuildings built or repaired, kelp hauled over frozen ground on slides to the gardens and meadows. Fishing and farming began together in the spring. One of the main challenges for each head of household was to deploy effectively the labour force under his command as different tasks competed for attention.



Fig. 13 The pioneer farm and farmstead 1825–1875. The pioneer farmstead was located strategically in the lee of the western ridge between the continually cultivated potato garden and the more expansive meadows on the flats. All meadows lay just above sea level; the garden and farmstead sites were on slightly more elevated and drier ground at the base of the ridge. Farmstead structures reflected the traditional pattern of agriculture: a large stable for housing livestock and poultry through the long winter, with a hay loft overhead; a root cellar for storing vegetables; and a dairy for milk and butter. The garden and three meadows were enclosed from the commons by post and rail fences.

and marshlands in the commons were harvested or grazed, and lumber was cut in the woods. In addition, Point Lancers built their own dwelling houses, outbuildings, fishing premises and boats almost totally from local materials, made their own nets and produced much of their own clothes, footwear, household furniture, fishing tools and farm implements.

Work was generally divided by gender. Fishing, logging, hunting, trapping and the sale of surplus produce



Fig. 14 The Big Meadow. Located on the flats east of the hamlet, Point Lance's premier meadow was the first one to be cleared. It was split into six shares in the second generation, and ten in the third. Family plots were marked but not enclosed. Most households worked their shares individually. Once the hay was gathered, the aftergrass was grazed communally in an openfield arrangement.



Fig. 15 The transmission of property 1860–1890. Rigid rules of land inheritance persisted over the generations. All six sons of Philip Careen received shares of the three ancestral meadows. As each son married, he built a house and outbuildings. Ned, the first to marry, built just across from the pioneer farmstead. Because he married a decade or more before his brothers, he inherited more land. Forty years later, in 1898, Ned was the only one of twelve Careen heads of household listed as a farmer. There was insufficient space for the remaining sons to establish homesteads beside the ancestral site. Three sons set up on The Old Garden, and one moved 'upalong'. Each son cleared new gardens, which they enclosed and worked individually. All six sons shared a single fishing stage and store. Following his father's death, Dick (the eldest and a bachelor), moved in with his youngest brother Micil and they worked their shares jointly.

were exclusively the preserve of males. So was basic construction and much of the more physically demanding farm operations: clearing land, digging gardens, hauling kelp and animal manure, and erecting fences. Apart from domestic housework and child-rearing, women also engaged in a variety of tasks: curing fish, tending to livestock and poultry, making butter, making hay, spinning wool, making clothes, managing gardens, and gathering wild fruit. There was an intimate relationship with the resources of the land.

Despite their economic contribution, women rarely inherited land. Only widows appear as heads of a

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Fig. 16 Panorama of the Flats. Looking east from the western ridge, the Big Meadow is in the foreground, bounded by Conway's Brook. Beyond are the gardens, meadows, pastures, and small ponds of the plain. Over 1.6km in width, it is the product of more than a century of land clearing, over four generations. Valleys such as this are characteristic of most settlements on the south-west Avalon. In 1870 a geologist described 'Branch with a river running through a wide beautiful valley and extensive flats of interval land. These alluvial lands are very fertile and mostly cleared and cultivated by the inhabitants. They yield excellent hay and root crops; some of the people had from 12 to 15 barrels of potatoes set. A few of the farms are quite extensive ... several averaging from ten to fourteen head of cattle'.

household, and then only if there was no adult son. This was rare. All six sons of Philip Careen inherited, as did all surviving sons in the third generation. Point Lance society and settlement morphology cohered around the lineal patriarchal family. The five eldest sons in the third generation born 1859-1899 were all named after their paternal grandfather, Philip Careen. Houses were built close to the ancestral dwelling, forming a loose cluster on slightly elevated sites along the base of the western ridge and the fringe of the cultivated valley floor. A partible and exclusively patrilineal pattern of inheritance ensured that all households in Point Lance shared a common surname.

This mode of transmission was replicated, with few exceptions, in neighbouring coves and along the Cape Shore. In Branch and Distress, where several pioneer nuclear families settled, a series of contiguous clusters evolved, each distinguished by a single surname, and referred to as 'squares'. They resembled the pre-Famine rundale 'clachans' evolving on the marginal uplands of Ireland. These communities were tightly-knit, emphasised

cooperation, and regulated their affairs informally through custom, consensus, and patriarchal advice. Without a school, church, or any other formal building or institution in the nineteenth century, the community of Point Lance exemplified the traditional social structure of hamlets facing the seas of the Northern North Atlantic.

#### **Farming in Point Lance**

Unlike most European immigrants in pioneer settings in Eastern Canada, the Careens did not confront formidable stands of deciduous and coniferous forests. Balsam fir and black spruce, rarely exceeding five metres in height, grew along the valley sides, but the broad valley floor, which was to form the core of improved land in Point Lance, contained only patches of low alder and willow scrub, with natural grasses. In the plateau country surrounding the settlement, vegetation was equally stunted and patchy. Pockets of coniferous shrub and small trees were found in the sheltered valleys, but elsewhere in this wind-swept peninsula an undulating open terrain interspersed with bog and rock was

characteristic. To the first Careens, the 'barrens' around Point Lance must have appeared reassuringly similar to the open hill masses of their homeland.

By far the most notable environmental contrast between south-east Ireland and Newfoundland was the climate. In the southern Avalon, winters are harsh and spring comes very late. South-east Ireland enjoys a mild, temperate climate with mean January temperatures of 6°C, compared to -4°C in Point Lance. July mean temperatures in both areas were between 13°C and 16°C, but in Point Lance the growing season is restricted to a mere 140 days, commencing in May, whereas in the homeland, frost is rare and growth continual through winter. Considerably more fodder was needed to see cattle through the long Newfoundland winter; hay has remained the main crop in Point Lance from the early days of settlement. A high annual precipitation (1,400mm) favoured grasses; frequent fog, cloud and rain retarded haymaking. Moreover, the heavy rainfall and low evaporation rates produced highly leached, acidic soils. In sharp contrast to sunny south-east Ireland, the cool, damp climate placed Point Lance beyond the margins of cereal cultivation.

The first Careens adjusted quickly to the new conditions and replicated the traditional pastoral economy common in Waterford. Hill country and other marginal agricultural areas were widely used for summer grazing and the Careens would have been familiar with the skills required to establish a commercial stock farm in Point

Lance. The natural meadows along the brook and river afforded good summer grazing, but cattle could not survive on bent and fescue grasses alone. The Careens cleared patches of scrub on the marine and fluvial terraces along Conway's Brook, drained the natural soils, and sometimes planted a crop or two of potatoes on the newly enclosed ground before returning it to permanent hay land. Timothy hayseed was planted to augment native grasses. Trees were leveled with small axes or hatchets and scrub roots removed with picks and mattocks. The refuse of the clearings was burned and the ashes sprinkled over the ground as fertiliser, although brush and light timbers were used for fences, and the better timber was salvaged for construction and for fuel.

Despite the absence of dense forests, the rate of land improvement in Point Lance was inordinately slow by North American standards. Through three to four decades of settlement – the first generation – only twenty acres or so had been improved and the average rate of clearing per household declined thereafter. Across much of frontier North America, land was plentiful and cheap, whereas labour was scarce and expensive. In these conditions it was economically advantageous to clear land as quickly as possible and to adopt an extensive system of grain or mixed farming. However, the pioneers of Point Lance, the Cape Shore, and indeed much of Newfoundland, cleared ground slowly and worked their acres intensively, much like peasants in the land-hungry regions of Europe. This



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Fig. 17 Like the uplands of the Irish homeland, traces of lazy beds mark abandoned gardens in Point Lance. In the middle distance, beyond the relict ridges, is the protective marine ridge. Beyond them are the beach and the broad Atlantic.



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Fig. 18 Subsistence gardens. Few landscape elements are more evocative of the Careens' Irish homeland than the subsistence garden with its lazy beds, potatoes, and other root crops. As in Ireland, potatoes were planted in ridges or 'lazy-beds', fashioned with the grafán (mattock) and long, narrow-bladed Irish spade. The craft of ridge making was transferred intact from the homeland. Furrows or trenches one and a half feet (0.5m) wide were marked out, dug to a depth of nine inches (0.2m), and heaped on ridges two and a half feet (0.8m) in width. A compost of kelp, fish offal and stable manure was added to the natural soils. Using the spade, seeds were set deep in the heart of the ridge.

intensive mode of farming was less a transfer of agrarian attitudes from the old world than an adaptation to local environmental constraints. Soils were too poor and the climate too inclement to sustain anything other than a subsistence arable economy.

The major incentive for clearing extra land in Point Lance was not to grow vegetables but to produce hay for feed. As livestock increased, the area of improved land expanded and Point Lancers combined an intensive and extensive pattern of pastoral husbandry. Improved meadows were enclosed, heavily manured, and worked intensively, but such land was rarely reserved as pasture. Livestock were grazed from May to November in the open country or 'commons' beyond the home fields, and wild meadows were harvested to supplement the hay grown on improved meadows. Such practices meant that there was little pressure to clear much land.

On an island where the cod economy dominated most settlements, however, Point Lance and the Cape Shore were noted for farming during the pioneer generation. There was no fishery until after 1841. In 1870, a geologist recorded that the only residents in Lance Cove was a family named Careen:

They made me welcome and treated me to lots of fresh milk and butter. They have a fine clearing here and a number of cattle. Careen is a fine type of an Irishman and has a family of several stalworth sons all about 6ft high. They live chiefly on the produce of their farm and the



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Fig. 19 Light wooden post and rail fences protected the gardens from cows and other livestock grazing the commons. As in pre-Famine Ireland, the potato was a major colonising crop. Ridges and trenches were rotated within an individual garden, and the gardens themselves were shifted around the flats periodically to work up the ground. Oats and timothy hayseed were often planted to return the gardens to meadows and pastures. The system was evocative of traditional Irish outfields.

fishery. I noticed just inside the doorway a long shelf on which lay several large wooden pails filled with fresh milk. A pannikin was used to dip up the milk and whenever they felt thirsty they could help themselves to as much as they liked. This with fresh fish and vegetables no doubt accounted for the splendid physique of all the family.

The geologist was equally impressed with Distress, noting that 'the people of this place are very well to do, have lots of fine cattle and sheep and grow excellent crops ... There is no trouble clearing the land, which is very fertile, and there is grazing in abundance'. Land clearing practices evolved out of south-east Irish tradition. The reclamation of wetlands and uplands in Waterford, as described by Arthur Young in 1776, was largely replicated in Point Lance and the Cape Shore. Using simple hand tools, the sparse pre-settlement vegetation was removed, and potato gardens created using the grafán (mattock), pick-axe and spade. Work in the gardens began early in May, and potatoes were the first crop planted. They were especially suited to newly cleared ground.

Environmental and economic conditions, and dietary preference, favoured the potato above other garden crops. Although it was susceptible to frost and blight, it thrived in the cool damp conditions of the south-west Avalon. It yielded more calories per acre than any other arable crop. More than one hundred barrels were harvested yearly by the first generation of Careens in Point Lance. It was a dietary staple. Deep digging ensured that extra nutrients in the lower soil horizons were brought to the surface of the



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Fig. 20 Hay cocks and potato patch in 'Jim's Little Barren' below the cemetery. Part of a traditional stable dominates the foreground, with a root cellar on the slope. In the inclement and uncertain weather of Point Lance, hay-making was always a hurried operation that required the combined labour of the entire family. Men cut and women and children spread the hay and it was stored in stable lofts or in barns and the surplus stacked outdoors.

beds; rocks and roots were unearthed and cleared away. Each successive year, ridge was alternated with furrow and this helped also to work up the ground. Like the infields of clachans in Ireland, Point Lance gardens could be cropped continually for twenty consecutive seasons.

Others were converted to meadows after two or three years, the gardens shifted around the grasslands to keep the ground well worked and to reduce weeds or disease. Each household worked on average half an acre and, as the number of families increased, new land was cleared. The gardens expanded south along the slopes on the road to the fishing room, eastwards across the flats to the Point Lance river, and north along the terraces by Conway's Brook. Over one hundred individual plots were worked by the fourth generation. The gardens were usually tended by the women through the summer, and harvested by the men in the fall. Vegetables were stored in long, narrow pits outdoors or in specially constructed root cellars near the dwelling house. A labour-intensive operation that changed little over the generations, it foreshadowed the organic gardening of modern times.

Oats were sown with timothy hayseed in gardens being converted to grassland, but in Point Lance, oats did not

ripen and were fed green to livestock. Oats and straw were important supplements to hay as feed for livestock in Ireland. Point Lancers depended overwhelmingly on hay to tide their livestock through the long winters. In any one season, over 90 per cent of all improved land was reserved for hay and pasture.

#### THE TRADITIONAL PASTORAL ECONOMY

During the first three to four decades of settlement, cattle provided the major cash income in Point Lance. Between twenty and thirty head were kept and beef and butter were



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Fig. 21 Cows graze open pastures on the commons along the Point Lance river.



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Fig. 22 Gathering hay by Conway's Brook. Haying began traditionally on Lady Day (15 August) but was often deferred until September, depending on the weather or the demands of the fishery. The crop was mowed with the scythe. The scene is iconically Irish in content and atmosphere.

marketed in Placentia and later in St. John's and Holyrood. In supporting the improvement of the Cape Shore road in 1845, an inspector noted the agricultural emphasis in the area and suggested that the number of cattle driven from there to St. John's would double if road improvements were made. Over one thousand pounds of butter were produced each summer for the local market. Butter was made in traditional dash-churns and was salted and stored in the dairy in homemade tubs or firkins until fall, when it was shipped out by schooner. Dry cattle, usually two or three years old, were driven each fall along the Cape Shore road to market. There was no regularly scheduled, European-style fair in Newfoundland, but butchers and farmers congregated near the wharves in St. John's at certain times and the butchers paid cash for the livestock.

Throughout the nineteenth century, each household slaughtered a few mature cattle late in the fall and the beef was stored in the dairy for domestic consumption. Point Lancers relied on the cold winter to preserve their meat, and whatever remained in the spring was salted. Hides were tanned and turned into leather for shoes, usually made by one man in the community. Mutton was an equally important item of diet and most families killed up to a dozen sheep and lambs in the fall. Traditionally, the first lamb was killed on Lady Day and meat was eaten fresh or fresh frozen until spring, when the surplus was salted.

The local market for salt mutton was poor and sheep could not be driven easily over the rough terrain to

Placentia, Holyrood, or St. John's. It was only with the introduction of motor-truck transport in the 1930s that commercial sheep-raising developed along the Cape Shore and slaughtering for local consumption declined. Sheep were shorn every June, the wool was washed, carded, and spun into yarn by the women, who would spend winter nights knitting socks, sweaters, mittens, dresses, and underwear. Pigs were raised only for home consumption. A thriving market for salt pork existed in St. John's but the Careens and other Cape Shore settlers could not compete with the Irish homeland in supplying this demand. Pigs would not thrive in the commons and required a diet of grain and potatoes all year. Domesticated ducks and geese were also sources of food and their feathers were used to stuff pillows and mattresses. Each household kept enough hens to supply eggs during summer and fall. In the traditional subsistence economy of Point Lance, the horse was widely used and every household kept at least one. The horse performed a variety of tasks: drawing kelp, capelin, offal, and stable manure to the fields; hay and other crops to the yard; wood from the forest; and transporting people (by slide) to neighbouring settlements in winter.

From May to November, cattle, sheep, and horses were grazed in the unenclosed, unimproved 'commons' beyond the farms. Good grazing was found along the cliffs and up the rivers, and herds wandered up to fifteen kilometres from the settlement, especially as the numbers of livestock

increased. Each householder branded his stock, but care of these herds was a shared responsibility, usually undertaken by boys who combined trouting or berry picking with the weekly task of checking the livestock. Cows were grazed in open areas close to the home fields and folded in a 'pound' by the stable after milking each evening. This practice of communal summer grazing resembled traditional Irish transhumance, but none of the salient features of the latter system was reproduced in Point Lance or anywhere on the Cape Shore. In the homeland, rights to graze the mountain pastures were reckoned by the amount of land or the number of ridges a family held in the infield and were just as jealously guarded, an indication of extreme land pressure. Each family in an Irish hamlet enjoyed rights of access to all local land resources but this meticulous subdivision or allocation was not required in the new setting, where the local resources were comparatively abundant. Restricted grazing, for example, was unnecessary in the under-exploited territory around Point Lance, and there was ample wood and fish and game for all. Young folk moved and stayed with their herds all summer in the Irish transhumance tradition; such labour in Point Lance could be far more profitably invested in clearing land, farming, and fishing.

Improved land was the major item of inheritance in Point Lance. Considerable labour was expended in clearing a garden on the slopes and even a meadow on the river flats required assiduous attention before it reached full productivity. Sons helped fathers to clear extra land and were rewarded by a share of the family property. At no time in the history of land succession in Point Lance was a son excluded from the patrimony. Each division of the land weakened the family property but uncleared land lay all about and cost only the hard labour invested in clearing it. Through the generations, almost every heir added land to his inheritance and fathers often continued to clear land after transmitting shares to the older sons. In the crowded lands of Ireland, this pattern of inheritance implied a permanent diminution of family property, but the land resource was always replaceable in the frontier environment of Point Lance. Land availability is an important factor in understanding succession and settlement patterns over the generations. Inheritance of a part of his father's land meant more, however, than simply an economic reward for the labour expended by a son on the family farm. It gave each son a start and a stake in the community. All he required was a pair of strong arms and help from family and kin to gain economic independence for his household.



Fig. 23 Harvesting the Cod. Point Lance was well located in relation to the annual movement inshore of cod and capelin. St. Mary's Cay had been the focus of a midshore schooner fishery since the seventeenth century from harbours in Placentia and St. Mary's Bay. The Careens fished the grounds nearer home. Each morning at dawn a crew of five to six men rowed from their stage to the grounds. Using hooks and lines they filled their boat and returned to shore.

#### THE COD FISHERY

Point Lance was close to one of the richest cod grounds in Newfoundland, off Cape St. Mary's. Productive grounds were also found inshore, only three kilometres from the pioneer farmstead. Yet for two decades after initial settlement, the Careens did not fish. No boats were recorded in the detailed census of 1836 nor were there any in the settlements along the Cape Shore (Branch and Beckford excepted). All heads of household were recorded as farmers. These Cape Shore coves were poor for landing fish. Water by the beaches such as Point Lance were shallow. At least a fathom of water was required for boats laden with cod to anchor for unloading. When the Careens



Fig. 24 Bull, Cow and Calf: The Fishing Grounds. Each spring the cod spawned in the cold deep waters offshore and, having eaten little while spawning, began to feed ravenously on their favourite food, the tiny silvery capelin. In June the capelin swarmed in their millions towards the beaches to spawn. They were pursued inshore by the cod. In Point Lance the cod congregated around the Bull, Cow and Calf from June until September.





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Fig. 25 The Fishing Room. Point Lance was far from ideal for landing fish. The only feasible location was this cliffside site in the lee of the prevailing south-westerlies. Water depth exceeded a fathom by the shore. The room was still exposed to south-easterly winds. Big seas curtailed fishing. In dry windy weather, the cod were transported in handbarrows along the circuitous path to the top of the cliff, where they were salted and placed on flakes to dry. Curing or drying was a labour-intensive task. Fish had to be taken in each night to the store, or covered with rind (bark) as a protection against rain or fog.

finally entered the fishery shortly after 1841, they built their stage more than one kilometre from their farm, out near Bull Point.

Point Lance's fishery is first recorded in the census of 1845 and in more detail in 1857. There was a single fishing room, two boats with a capacity for four to fifteen quintals [traditionally one hundred weight] of fish each, a cod seine, and five crew. Oral tradition records that the Careens used a single boat, called a skiff, with six crew. Forty feet long and fifteen feet wide, it was propelled by five rowing oars and a sculling oar. As the cod swarmed towards the beach in pursuit of the capelin, the Careen crew used the seine, a vertical wall of hempen mesh up to 60m in length, to circle and corral the cod on the smooth ocean floor and haul the net to the skiff, or sometimes to the shore. The seine was also used to trap schools of herring for bait. At a cost of five to seven pounds, it was one of the most expensive items in the fishery. After the capelin scull, the cod retreated from the inner waters of the cove to the grounds off Bull Point. When the fish were landed, they were split, gutted, headed and washed, then carried from the stage up the cliff on handbarrows to be salted and placed on the flakes.

The cod were only fully cured after several weeks of wind or sunshine. This work was performed mainly by men servants in the eighteenth century, but with the growth of permanent family settlement, women and children replaced migratory male labour on the flakes. The Careens did employ 'shipped men' through the nineteenth



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Fig. 26 One of the oldest and most enduring landscape items in Newfoundland, the fishing stage was a vital component in the settlement fabric. It commanded access to and from the sea. It lay at the heart of a suite of features that made up the fishing room. Built initially in the 1840s, the Careens' communal stage and store were dismantled around 1920. All stages and associated rooms were similar in construction and design.

century, but curing fish was overwhelmingly a family-centred enterprise. Because fishing began at dawn, the men lived in tilts close to the stage through the summer. Initially there was a single tilt for the large crew, but with the introduction of smaller boats and two-men crews, separate tilts were constructed.

Difficult sites meant considerable extra work in constructing shore structures. Stages were projected further out to sea to ensure deep waters. Crude wooden walkways had to be installed along the cliff to move fish



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Fig. 27 The Tilts. Evocative of the booleys in the pastoral economy of the homeland, the all-male summer huts or tilts were located one kilometre from the hamlet of Point Lance. They were one-roomed wooden structures, originally with a stone hearth for preparing meals, and bunks for the crew. Descendants of the eighteenth-century cookrooms of migratory male servants, the tilts of Point Lance saved on commuting time for fishermen and typified many outports where suitable landing sites lay at a distance from permanent homes. Fishermen usually returned to their houses for Sunday. It was a maritime equivalent of transhumance.

up to the flakes. The labour-intensive nature of the fishery, and its increasing reliance on family labour, influenced patterns of inheritance, settlement, and demography in places like Point Lance.

A fishery, however, is less reliable than farming. There were fluctuations yearly in the catch. In 1857 the five Careens processed 350 quintals (almost 400,000 lbs) of cod. It was the highest average catch per fisherman on the Cape Shore. And at twenty pounds per quintal, it far exceeded the commercial value of produce amongst even middling farmers in Waterford over a summer. But the cost of supplies – salt, technology – was high. Philip Careen appears in the Sweetman ledgers in 1843 with a debt of over sixty pounds. A poor season could result in the catch halving.

Point Lancers did not change their methods of curing fish until after 1950 but changes in catching technology after 1870 influenced the social composition of crews with implications for the evolution of society and settlement. The cod seine with its large skiff and crew was abandoned in favour of new home-made hempen nets 91m long, and 2m deep, with 10cm meshes to trap the cod. These nets were best operated by a two-man crew. A smaller boat, built locally, and equipped with a mainsail, foresail, jib and a pair of oars, was used to set the nets each evening on the nobbs, shoals and ledges beyond Bull Island Point. Cod were hauled the following morning. It involved less labour than the seine or handlines, but fragmenting the large kin-based crew weakened the closely-knit communal and patriarchal nature of Point Lance society. Fishing was now conducted by single households. They built separate tilts and eventually some new stages as the pioneer stage became crowded. Eight two-man crews were based there in the 1890s. An intimate knowledge of water depths, the direction of currents, tides, and winds on the migratory habits of cod through the summer was required to locate good berths. As in the south-east of Ireland, a system of visual triangulation with marks on shore was used; this knowledge was passed on to successors.

Stages, stores, flakes and tilts, nets and boats were all fixed items of property transmitted from father to sons in a pattern closely related to the transmission of improved land, houses, outbuildings and livestock. The pioneer stage, a substantial wooden structure eighteen by five metres and adjoining store, used by the first three generations of Careens, was dismantled around 1920. It had been gradually replaced by smaller family units. Stages commanded access to the sea and were the only structures consistently divided among heirs. Other facilities were usually passed on undivided to the youngest son.

For a century and a half, the cod fishery was the cornerstone of Point Lance's commercial economy. It brought in the bulk of whatever cash was accumulated. Following the decline of Sweetmans in Placentia around 1860, the Careens started to take their fish and oil directly to St John's. Like some other large kin groups in the area, they acquired a schooner to take produce to market. The fish were graded on the wharf, weighed, and (after the merchant had deducted the value of supplies issued on credit in the spring, and the cost of winter provisions), any surplus was paid in cash.

Point Lancers feared and respected the sea, a source of sustenance, and of danger. They were adept at reading its many moods. It was pervasive. Nautical terms were used to describe land-based activities in the woods, in the fields, and socially through the hamlet. All other exploitative strategies have been interwoven with, but supplementary to, harvesting the sea.

#### IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY

Newfoundland's Irishness is much touted – and contested – in modern academic and popular discourse. Some claim the island as the thirty-third county of Ireland, containing the most authentically Irish places in the entire diaspora. This characterisation centres on dialect and on genres of folklore, notably music and song. Irish accents are best preserved in the southern Avalon although there is no detailed examination of their historic formation. Most Irish immigrants were born before 1800, the great majority before 1820. Many of those coming from parishes east of a line centred on Waterford city, and particularly from county Wexford, spoke English only. The prominence of Wexford in Placentia and its hinterland meant an early introduction of Hiberno-English there. To what extent it influenced, or was influenced by, the pre-existing dialects of Devon and Dorset in Placentia Bay remains unknown.

Migrants and emigrants drawn from parishes west of the Waterford line spoke mainly Irish. It was not transmitted to their Newfoundland-born offspring although there are Irish words aplenty in the south Avalon dialect. Careen, for example, is Irish for Ó Cuirín (Curran), one of several examples of linguistic survival on the periphery long after the language's virtual disappearance in the homeland. Philip and Edward Careen almost certainly spoke Irish on arrival at Placentia. If they were monoglots, they quickly acquired English, the language of the fishery. There was no memory of spoken Irish in Point Lance and settlements along the Cape Shore in 1968, when dozens of descendants born before 1900 (including some of the grandchildren of Philip Careen) were interviewed.



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Fig. 28 Going to Sunday mass in Point Lance. Amongst the most salient and enduring symbols of ancestral Irish settlement is the Catholic chapel and cemetery, usually with an adjacent school and hall. Traditionally they comprised the only public buildings in small outports with a retail shop or store. They are evocative of the chapel villages of south-east Ireland. The complex at Point Lance has deep roots in Newfoundland. In 1785 Fr. Burke, a native of Fethard (Tipperary), established the parish of Placentia. Built on land donated by the nearby mercantile firm of Saunders and Sweetman, it initially included a chapel, presbytery and cemetery. A second chapel replaced the original structure in 1830, a third in 1878, all on the same site. As late as 1897, all resident priests came from Ireland. Mission chapels were built in outlying harbours as Catholic settlement expanded and intensified. A second one was established in Little Placentia in 1816, with a resident priest Fr. Pelagius Nowlan of Kilrush (Wexford), arriving in 1834. Close to a dozen institutions were in place in south-west Avalon by 1850; they included complexes at Distress and at Branch, the largest communities on the Cape Shore. The first chapel at Point Lance was built after 1900, the third (shown) in 1961.

That is unsurprising since, as early as 1857, over 90% of the inhabitants in the south-west Avalon were native-born.

Philip and Edward Careen were the only two Irish immigrants ever recorded in Point Lance. When Philip died around 1875, his Irish died with him, as it did with the passing of the immigrants everywhere in Newfoundland. The loss of the language had a profound impact on Irish identity, although Irish was also fading in the Munster homeland, albeit not as dramatically as in Newfoundland.

Religion replaced language in the ethnic consciousness of Irish descendants in Newfoundland in the nineteenth century. This evolution was also evident in the homeland. Irish and Catholic became virtually synonymous. From their beginnings in the early eighteenth century, the Newfoundland Irish were perceived by British colonial officials as a distinct ethno-religious group. The denial of civil rights to Irish Catholics and the proscription of their religion reinforced a sense of a separate ethnic identity. It was only as late as 1779 that the ban on Catholic worship was finally removed, when a Waterford-based Franciscan James O'Donel, a native of Knocklofty (Tipperary), was given permission to establish a Catholic mission. O'Donel

arrived in 1784 and established two parishes, in St. John's and Harbour Grace. William Burke was recruited from Waterford the following year and founded the parish of Placentia. With the financial support of the mercantile firm Saunders and Sweetman, their servants and their dealers, Burke secured a site in the harbour, built a chapel and presbytery, enclosed land for a cemetery, and introduced the Tridentine Catholic parish model from south-east Ireland.

When the Careens arrived three decades later, this Catholic complex stood out as iconic and familiar in the strange new world of a commercial cod fishery. Philip Careen's name appears in the Sweetman ledger of 1826, paying annual dues to Fr. Andrew Cleary, the resident parish priest. Cleary (1774–1829) was a native of Carrick-on-Bannow, south-west Wexford. Almost certainly he celebrated the marriage of Philip Careen to Anne Viscount. Despite Jersey Protestant origins, the Viscount descendants were all Catholic and English-speaking by 1800, a product of linguistic assimilation, intermarriage with the Irish, and religious conversion. One of Anne Viscount's sisters married James Travis of Bruley in inner

Placentia Bay, a man mainly if not exclusively of Anglican English descent. Both spouses, however, were Catholic, their children first cousins of the nine children of Philip Careen. But the Travis lineage was less Irish than British. For the extended Careen family, the synonymity of Catholic and Irish was not affirmed. This did not apparently affect their sense of Irishness in Point Lance, at least not as proclaimed traditionally. Over three generations there, only three of thirty seven spouses bore non-Irish surnames: Viscount and Bessau (Jersey), and Moores (English). All were born Catholic, with some Irish ancestry: over two generations, only three first names were distinctly English, two of them the daughters of Mary Moores.

For more than a century the Catholic clergy serving the parish of Placentia were derived exclusively from Ireland. They had a profound influence in sustaining an Irish Catholic ethos in communities throughout south-west Avalon. As Catholic devotion evolved in nineteenth-century Ireland, innovations were quickly introduced to

Newfoundland, resulting in a comprehensive transfer of religious culture. The manifold links between religion and ethnicity became even more pronounced with the importation of a militant, ultramontane Catholicism under the agency of Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming (1792-1850) and his priests in the 1830s.

With the advent of electoral politics, these links became public. John Kent of Waterford, a brother-in-law of Bishop Fleming, began his campaign for election in 1832 urging 'Irishmen and Catholics' to 'stand up for your country and your creed'. He topped the poll in St. John's. But Patrick Kough of Tintern (Wexford), was also elected, defeating William Carson, a Kent ally. Older and more established than Kent, Kough carried the moderate Catholic vote, particularly amongst the native-born lower middle class. Representing a more conciliatory Catholicism, that emphasised harmony over hostility towards Protestants, they did not rally to Kent's call. Kough also attracted liberal Protestant support and some Irish Catholic immigrants also voted for Carson, a radical Scottish



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Fig. 28 Careen gravestones, cemetery, Point Lance. Compared to the striking venerable cemeteries of south-east Ireland, Point Lance's relatively recent (1920) graveyard has a distinct colonial look and feel. But as in Ireland, death and family were constants in people's lives and the cemetery remains amongst the most visited public spaces in Point Lance. An outdoor mass is celebrated in the cemetery each August in memory of kin and generations past. It brings together descendants from near and far to affirm ancestry, faith and identity, in a manner strikingly evocative of the pattern mass in Ireland. Throughout the nineteenth century, most deceased residents of Point Lance were interred in Distress (St. Brides).



MICHAEL COADY



JOHN MANNING

Fig. 31 The first day of May (Bealtaine) was a pivotal date in the Irish agrarian calendar, marking the transition from the winter to the summer half of the year. Decorated with local wild flowers and bright ribbons, the May Bush brought good luck to crops and livestock. Flowers were also placed on the May altar in the chapel through the month. The ritual is strongly associated with women and a female divinity who nurtures animals and crops. It was one of several Celtic rituals later absorbed by the Christian church, in this case by a dedication to the Virgin Mary. On May Eve in the parish of Glenmore, county Kilkenny, small dried-out hawthorn bushes were placed beside gaps where cattle were driven and set on fire to ward off evil spirits or bad luck. The May Bush was among the most distinctive Irish folk customs to cross the Atlantic. This venerable tradition was honoured in Point Lance and in other Irish settlements in Newfoundland. A local bush of spruce or fir, bedecked with coloured cloth or ribbons, was placed by the entrance gate to the home. It honoured Mary and was believed to bring good luck to the spring planting. On the left, Leo Careen (1908–86) of Point Lance stands beside the bush decorated by his sister Kit (1902–94) in 1982. Kit and Leo, regarded as the foremost tradition bearers in Point Lance, belonged to the fourth generation of Careens. On the right, a May Bush created by Molly Dowling is attached to a telegraph pole in Glenmore in 1975.

Presbyterian reformer. Religion and ethnicity were not the sole arbiters of an emerging political culture. Yet for a generation or more, Catholics generally supported the Liberal party, and Protestants voted Conservative, particularly in the populous districts of St. John's and Conception Bay, where both denominations were substantial and residentially mixed.

The south-west Avalon was different, particularly in the more isolated outports, where most inhabitants were politically passive. In 1832 Roger Forristal Sweetman became the first member for Placentia in the new House of Assembly. There is no record of an election and he was presumably returned by acclamation. Sweetman was the leading merchant resident in the harbour and the bay. Most Protestant planters dealt with him, as they had been doing with the company for four generations. William Saunders, a Protestant from Bideford in Devon, acting head of the company on the death of his father-in-law, Richard Welsh, was the leading patron (with Pierce Sweetman) of the Catholic church at Placentia. By 1832 the Catholics there, most of them native-born, defined themselves primarily as Catholics of Irish descent. A gradual indigenisation of culture diminished homeland antecedents.

In 1836, it was observed that the Catholics of Placentia Bay were far more peaceable, living in harmony with their Protestant neighbours, than were the recently arrived Irish

immigrants in St. John's. The Careens of Point Lance should be seen in this context. Their Irishness was implicit and informal, rarely publicly proclaimed. There was no ethnic 'other,' no continuing discourse on ethnicity. James Howley's description of Philip Careen in 1870 'as the finest kind of an Irishman' presumably refers to the fact that he came from Ireland, the sole immigrant in the community. He was almost certainly illiterate, as were his children. All links with kin in the homeland were severed. In this sense, Philip and Edward Careen were uprooted. The relatively modest number of Irish immigrants on the Cape Shore, or indeed south-western Avalon, came from six different counties. Almost certainly, none of them hailed from the Careen's own townland or even parish. The intensely local nature of Irish culture was shattered, and the ties that bind had to be laboriously rebuilt anew.

None of Philip Careen's descendants over three generations ever saw Ireland. Like most descendants in the region, no extant memory recalls his precise place of origin. Nor did descendants associate the farming traditions described here with the homeland, at least not in the twentieth century. Even the Catholic chapel, school and cemetery, all established after 1900, were no longer explicitly linked to Ireland. Point Lancers were far removed from St. John's with its cathedral, convents, Mercy and Presentation nuns, Irish Christian Brothers' schools, and



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Fig. 32 Even in hitherto isolated outports, the cultural landscape is dynamic, forever evolving, its contents in a state of flux. This dwelling is built on an abandoned pasture at the edge of the community beyond Conways Brook. In 1968, there were only two or three modern houses in Point Lance. Today, only three traditional houses remain.

ethnic organisations like the Mechanic's Society or the Benevolent Irish Society. Richard and Edward Careen left Ireland before Daniel O'Connell mobilised the Irish poor into a potent political force in his campaign for Catholic Emancipation and repeal of the Union.

Both campaigns diffused quickly to Newfoundland and flourished amongst the concentrated expatriate Irish populations of St. John's, and Conception Bay. When news reached St. John's in 1829, that the struggle for emancipation had been won, the Wexford-born Bishop Thomas Scallan announced a public holiday, with parades and masses. Subsequently a Repeal Fund was set up; donations were collected outside chapels on Sundays, and Irish merchants and shipmasters, delivered the money to the Repeal Association when they returned to Waterford in the fall. Patrick Morris, a wealthy merchant and a politician who divided his time between St. John's and his native Waterford, was a key O'Connell lieutenant.

Newfoundland's Irish now engaged in ethnic politics in a manner not evidenced in the century before 1820. A heightened sense of Irishness emerged in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. It was not, however, socially or spatially comprehensive. Middle class immigrants in the towns and large harbours, particularly where there were English Protestant neighbours, were foremost. By contrast, the isolated, egalitarian coves, such as the Cape Shore, were largely unaffected. No head of household from there appears in the lists of donors to the



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Fig. 33 'The Old Garden' 'downalong' lay under the shelter of the ridge at Point Lance. This was the site for three of the five households of the second generation (see fig. 15). Beyond the slope, in line with the church, the first white house marks the site of the pioneer farmstead. Limited space for extra homesteads dictated that only one son succeeded his father in 'The Old Garden'. Surplus sons moved 'upalong', closer to their gardens and meadows. The road to and from the tilts is in the foreground.

Repeal Fund. However, one cannot argue that their heritage was less Irish. Isolated places in the homeland were also politically passive.

Identity formation was not based solely, or even primarily, on Old World origins. For the Careens, including the first generation, it was marked by the struggle to make a living, the creation of an economy, and the formation of a large, patrilineally extended family over four generations. Richard and Edward Careen successfully reproduced some of their culture in an unpromising new setting, but they left most of it behind, or it faded into history on their demise. As each

successive generation became more detached from an Irish homeland identity, its presence was memorialised in a mixture of myth, legend and folklore. The relatively recent rediscovery of their roots through modern travel and mass communication has resulted in a revival, where Irishness has re-entered the ever-evolving process of identity formation.

Living frugally in a harsh, isolated and in many ways uninviting environment, the people of Point Lance exhibited admirable resilience over the generations. The present commitment to and appreciation of this place can only be understood in the light of its history and habitat.

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