

the town of
Conception
Bay South

CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH T'RAILWAY.

Foxtrap.

Early History.

Settled in the early 1800s, the earliest known settlers of Foxtrap were Charles Butler, John Kennedy, John Petten (fishermen), along with William Batten, Grace Delaney, Joseph and Michael Feagan (Fagan), and Patience Porter. According to local tradition, "Foxtrap" apparently takes its name from the fact settlement developed in an unnamed area where "only foxes were caught in the rabbit- snares" while a contemporary 1835 account

suggests that Foxtrap was a "pair of moccasins". Foxtrap had 84 residents in 1845 growing to about 500 by 1911. In 1971 there were 908 residents here, however both Greeleytown and Peachytown (named after families who settled there: Greeley and Peach) are associated with Foxtrap and the total residents thus increased to 1,510 that same year. In 1986 Foxtrap was included in the Town of Conception Bay South.

Historical Site.

Located off Oakes Lane and Church Road, the earliest legible headstone in All Saints Anglican Cemetery #1 dates to 1850. Local slate stones placed at the head and foot of graves are without wording and may be even older. It was the first property to be awarded the Town's heritage recognition that did not have a building.



All Saints Anglican Cemetery #1 was designated a Municipal Heritage Site in 2002.

Heritage Personality.



Rev. Benjamin Fleet 1800 - 1876.

Born in London, Fleet came to Newfoundland as a teacher. Ordained in 1842, he was appointed Missionary by the Society for the Propagation of

the Gospel to the South Shore. The Foxtrap Mission covered 11 settlements between Topsail and Seal Cove. He was the first Church of England clergyman stationed on the south shore of Conception Bay. He was instrumental in the building of the first chapel in the area and served here until his death. In 1928 the Foxtrap-Hopewell Mission was elevated to parish status and All Saints Church, constructed in 1932, remains active. It is north of the T'Railway along Dunns Hill Road and can be viewed from nearby All Saints Road, where a school of the same name operated 1961-1999.

In Our Roots.



Many small fields like these are scattered throughout Foxtrap.

Early Railway History.

When the railway project was finally ready to move forward, Canadian surveyors were hired by a London firm and then started the job of finding the best railway route from St. John's to Hall's Bay. Not everyone was excited by the proposed railway and both pro-railway and anti-railway supporters were vocal in their opinions. Anti-railway residents feared not receiving restitution for expropriated or damaged land and increased taxes on consumer goods. They also predicted that the railway would bankrupt the country and therefore Newfoundland would be forced into Confederation with Canada. The anti-railway Water Street

merchants feared that large firms from the mainland would take business from them. These fears resulted in propaganda being spread that the railway would take land from the local residents. The people of Foxtrap believed that the red flannel flags that the surveyors were using were really Canadian flags, and if they were placed on their land then that land would then belong to Canada. This caused great anxiety for the residents of this shore because their land was their livelihood. If people lost access or had damage to their land they would face disaster.

1880 Battle of Foxtrap.

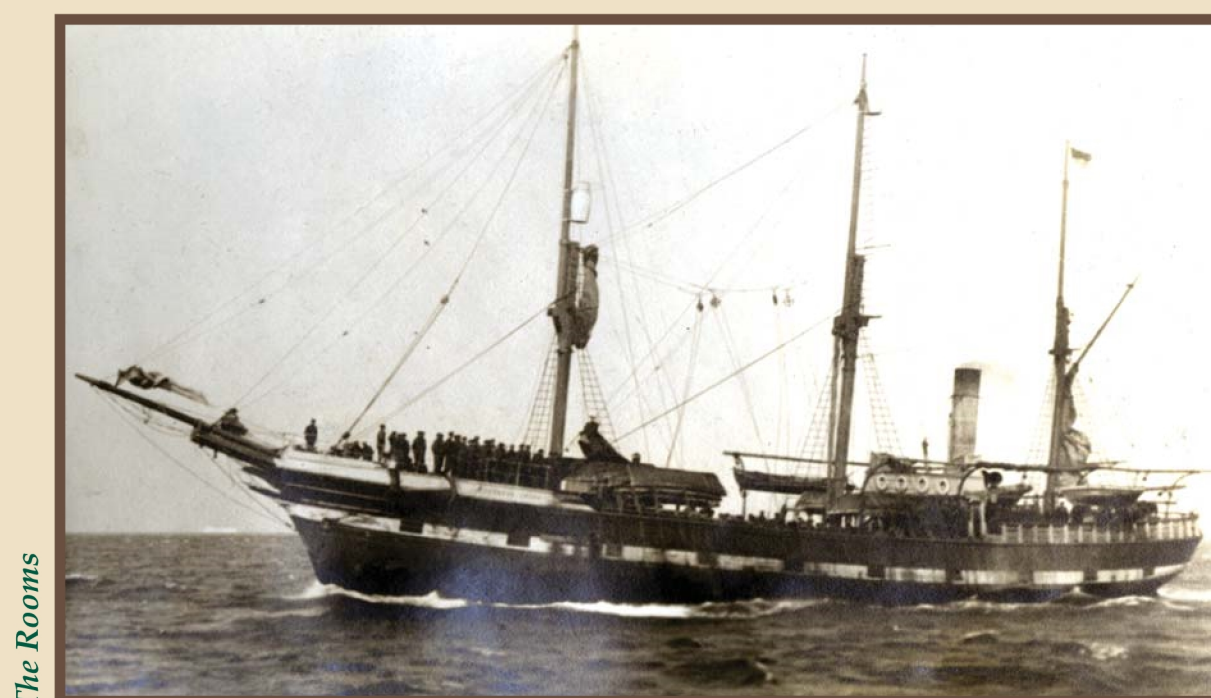
By the time the surveying crew reached Fox Trap (as it was then known) tempers were running high. They encountered both verbal and physical threats. The confrontation escalated to the point that the crew feared for their safety. Most of the rebels were women because the men were away at the Labrador fishery. These people stood firm and were desperate to protect their land. It was reported in the *Morning Chronicle* that one local woman swore to "let daylight into the stomachs of the invaders" if they did not retreat. Judge D. W. Prowse and a group of constables were sent out from the city to squash the rabble rousers in Foxtrap.

The uprising in the communities along Conception Bay was not caused simply by a lie perpetrated by disgruntled merchants. People of the area were struggling for existence as it was. Merchants further inflamed their fears of losing their land by telling them that building a railway would take away from their resources.



A Greeleytown farmer in his hot-cap covered cabbage field.

1914 Disasters : Sealing.



Thirty residents of Conception Bay South were amongst the 174 lost on the S.S. *Southern Cross* on March 31st.

Going to "the ice" in the spring to hunt seals was a privilege; a berth on a sealing ship was keenly sought after by boys and men from all around the Island. It was a proving ground for a young boy's passage into manhood and, hopefully, a good catch would mean hard cash coming

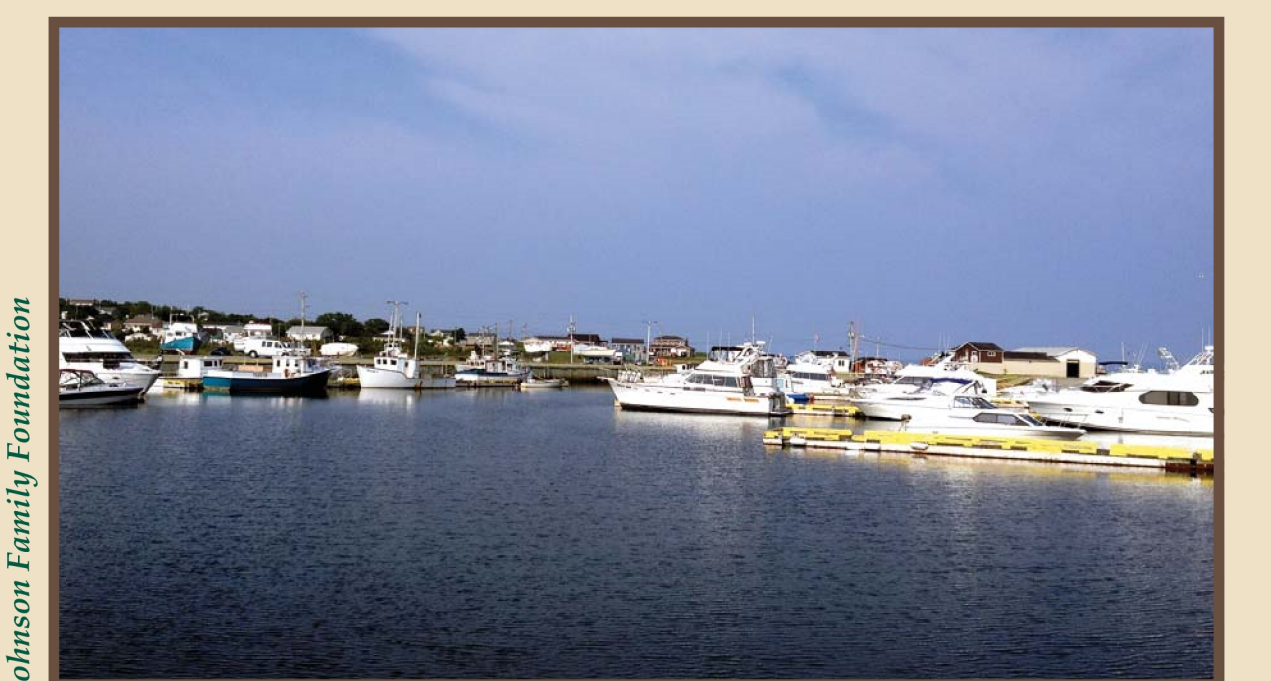
into a family when it was needed most. Hard and dangerous work, the sealers worked under treacherous conditions both on the ice and onboard their ship. The year 1914 took its toll all over Newfoundland when the S.S. *Southern Cross* was lost with all hands and the men of the S.S. *Newfoundland* were left on the ice field in a blizzard. Conception Bay South lost 30 sons on the former ship and two on the latter.



Sealers with their gaffs and flags.

Foxtrap Marina.

The Marina wraps around on a small cove that has been used to tie up fishing boats for generations. There was a breakwater and the boats were moored inside and onto sunken buoys. Over the years that breakwater has been heightened, with docks added to bring the capacity to about 60 vessels.

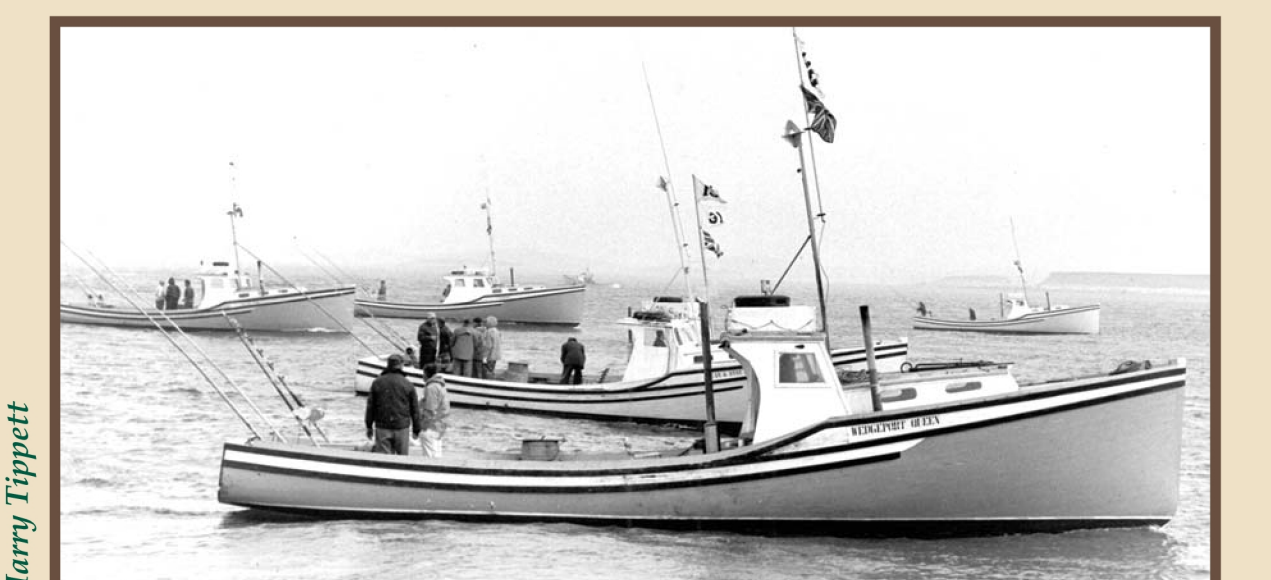


An early morning view of boats at the Foxtrap Marina.

Tuna Fishing.

Bluefin tuna fishing became a popular sport fishery in Conception Bay from 1957 to the early-1970s. The largest of the mackerel-like fishes, it is also known as horse mackerel and common tunny. Tuna boats operated out of Long Pond and Holyrood in the boom days and the area was widely advertised as a destination for sport anglers. A common sight was seeing the tuna hung by its tail above the 'tuna dock' with the weight, date, and boat information recorded for a photo with the happy angler. Lee Wulff, famed American outdoorsman, film maker, and outfitter was brought to Newfoundland in 1938 to help promote our tourism. He set a world record in 1967 when, on only a 50-pound test line, he landed a 271 kg / 597 lb bluefin in Conception Bay. The largest tuna on record caught in this bay – 462 kg / 1,018 lb – was weighed at the Foxtrap Marina in 2003 and the World Record is held since 1979 from a 679 kg / 1,496 lb landing in Nova Scotia. More recently, a lucrative off-shore commercial

tuna fishery is regulated by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. There continues to be a sport rod-and-reel fishery, however the tuna quota is down to just one licence for eight tuna in the Bay.



Cape Island style boats were first used in the tuna fishery.



Great day on Conception Bay for one tuna boat crew and lucky angler.