

the town of
Conception
Bay South

CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH T'RAILWAY.

Chamberlains.

Early Settlers.

Located between Topsail and Manuels, early settlers of this area of the "South Shore" were engaged in the cod fishery, with their own boats and stages, supplemented by farming. By 1810 the Metcalf(e), Smith, Stickley, Williams and families were living here. The population increased after the road was built from St. John's in the 1850s. The *Census* of 1845 lists Chamberlain

(minus the 's') with a population of 105. The population grew to 288 people in 1901 and up to 412 by 1945. The surnames Casey, Chaytor, Dowden, Foster, Fowler, Hiscock, Mercer, Slade, and Squires, were later residents of Chamberlains. When Chamberlains became part of the Local Improvement District of Conception Bay South in 1971, there were 988 residents here.



Pat & David O'Brien

A photograph of Chamberlains, taken during a train ride in 1976, with nearby Kelly's Island in the foreground, and Bell Island in the background.

In Our Roots.

As the wooded land nearest the shore was cut out for firewood and lumber, the fishers began to till the fertile soil. First they farmed for themselves. As the population grew, so did the size and numbers of "gardens" or fields. The *Census* of 1891 records 82 tons of hay was harvested, 1617 barrels of potatoes, and 227 of turnips. By the 1901 *Census*,

it is certain that more gardens were cleared, with 177 tons of hay coming from the land, yet barrels of potatoes were down to 1474, and turnips up to 372. These self-sufficient people raised sheep, hogs, poultry, and cattle for both meat and milk, and made their own butter and cream. The excess produce was brought to St. John's to sell or trade.

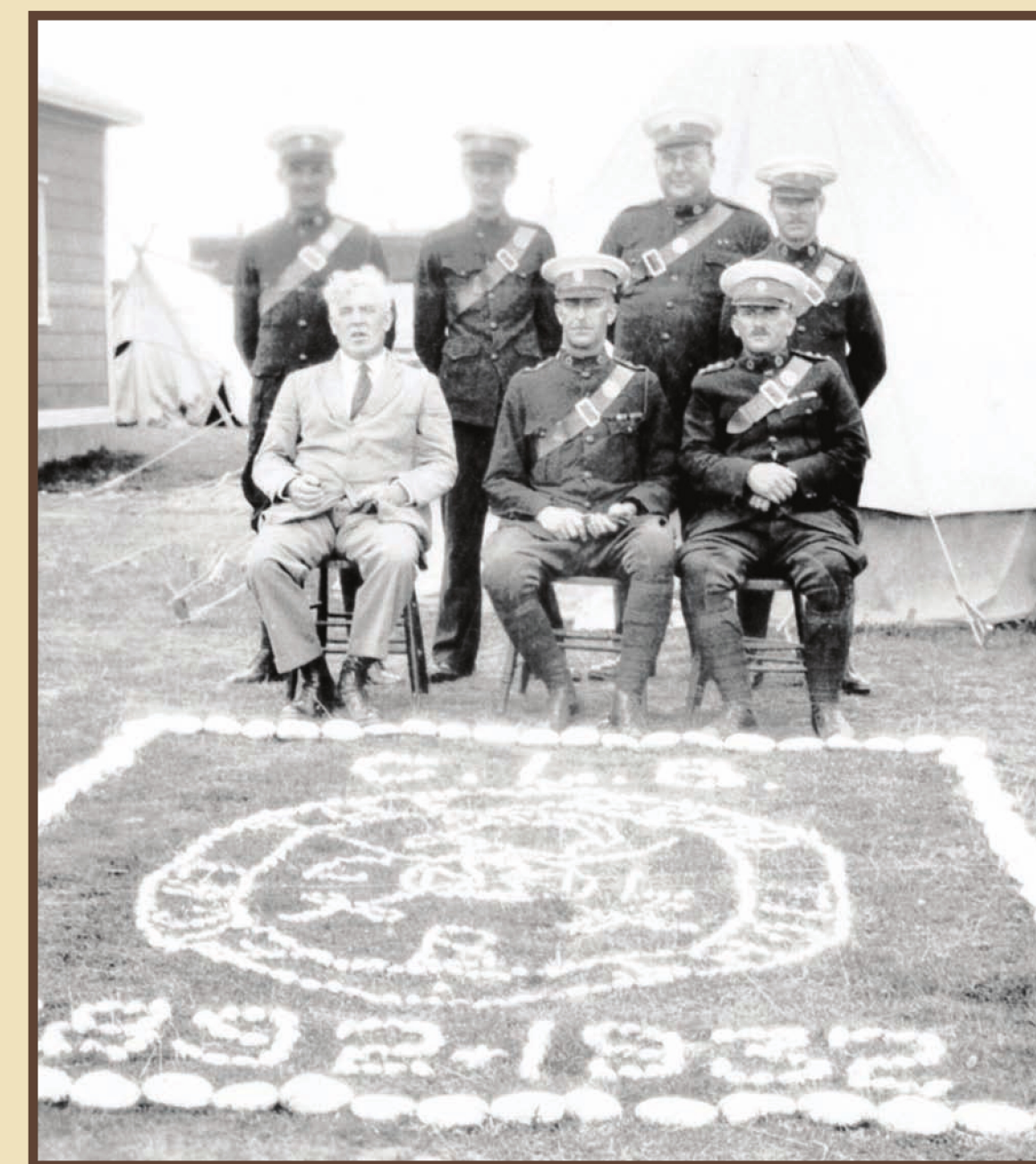


The Rooms Provincial Archives Division V1 19-130

An early-1900s view of Chamberlains beach used for drying fish and recreation.

CLB Camp.

The first overseas unit of the Church Lads' Brigade was started in St. John's in 1892 by Harold Blackler, a year after the CLB was founded in London, England. The popular CLB Camps were held in Chamberlains beginning in 1893 for boys from all over Newfoundland, with girls starting in 1998. For 55 years the CLB Camps were held at the eastern side of Chamberlains Pond, later moving to Mint Brook, near Gambo. In 2014, the CLB had over 1,000 members in 22 companies spread across the eastern part of the Island.



CLB Archives

CLB Officers pose by the rock sign near the entrance to the 1932 Camp.



CLB Archives

A view of a 1930s CLB Camp from across Topsail Road. Farm fields are in the foreground.

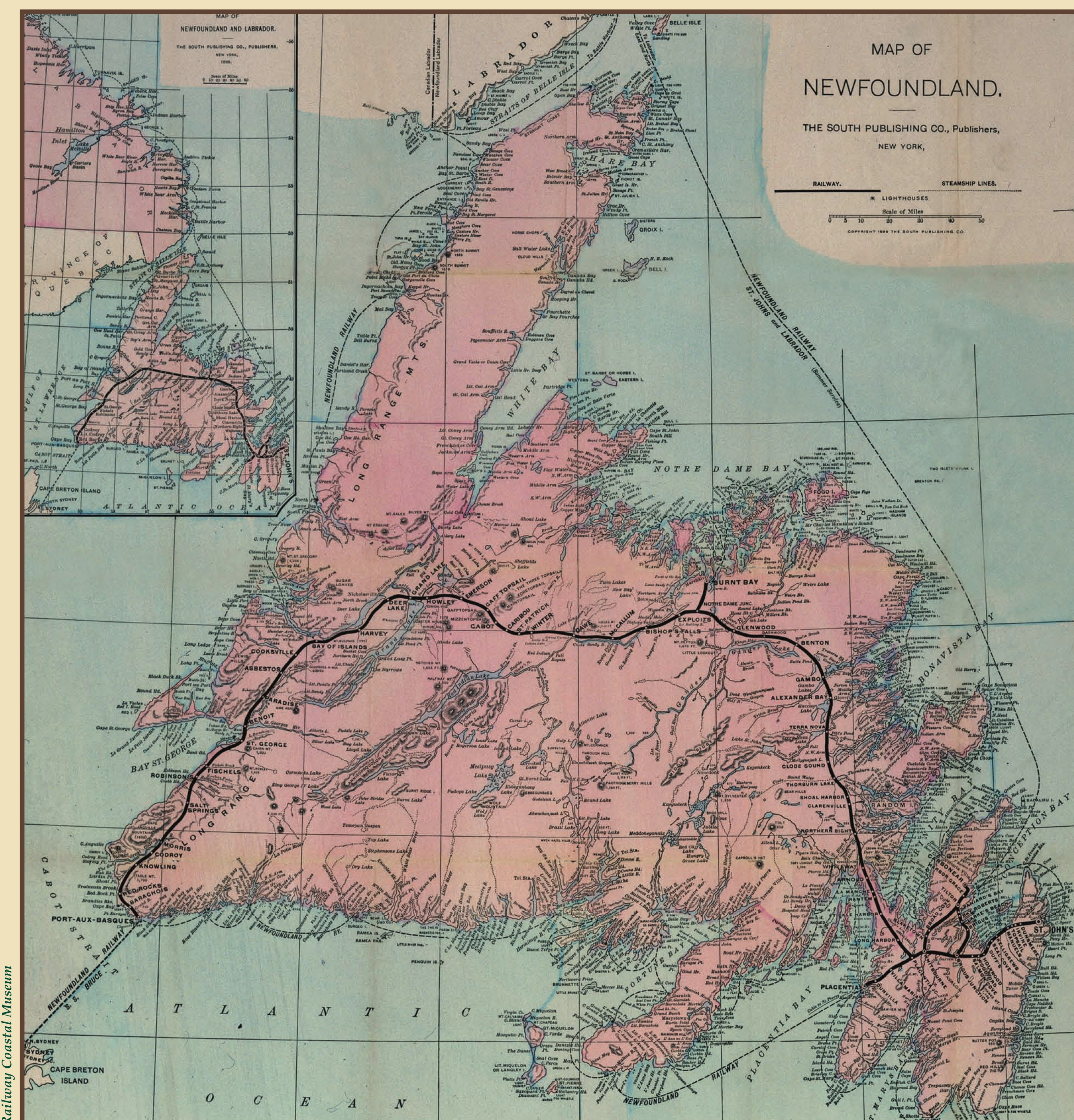
The Newfoundland Railway.

In 1880 the Government decided to construct a railway to develop resources and to lessen people's isolation and

dependency on the fishery. A five-year contract was awarded to the American "Blackman Syndicate", to

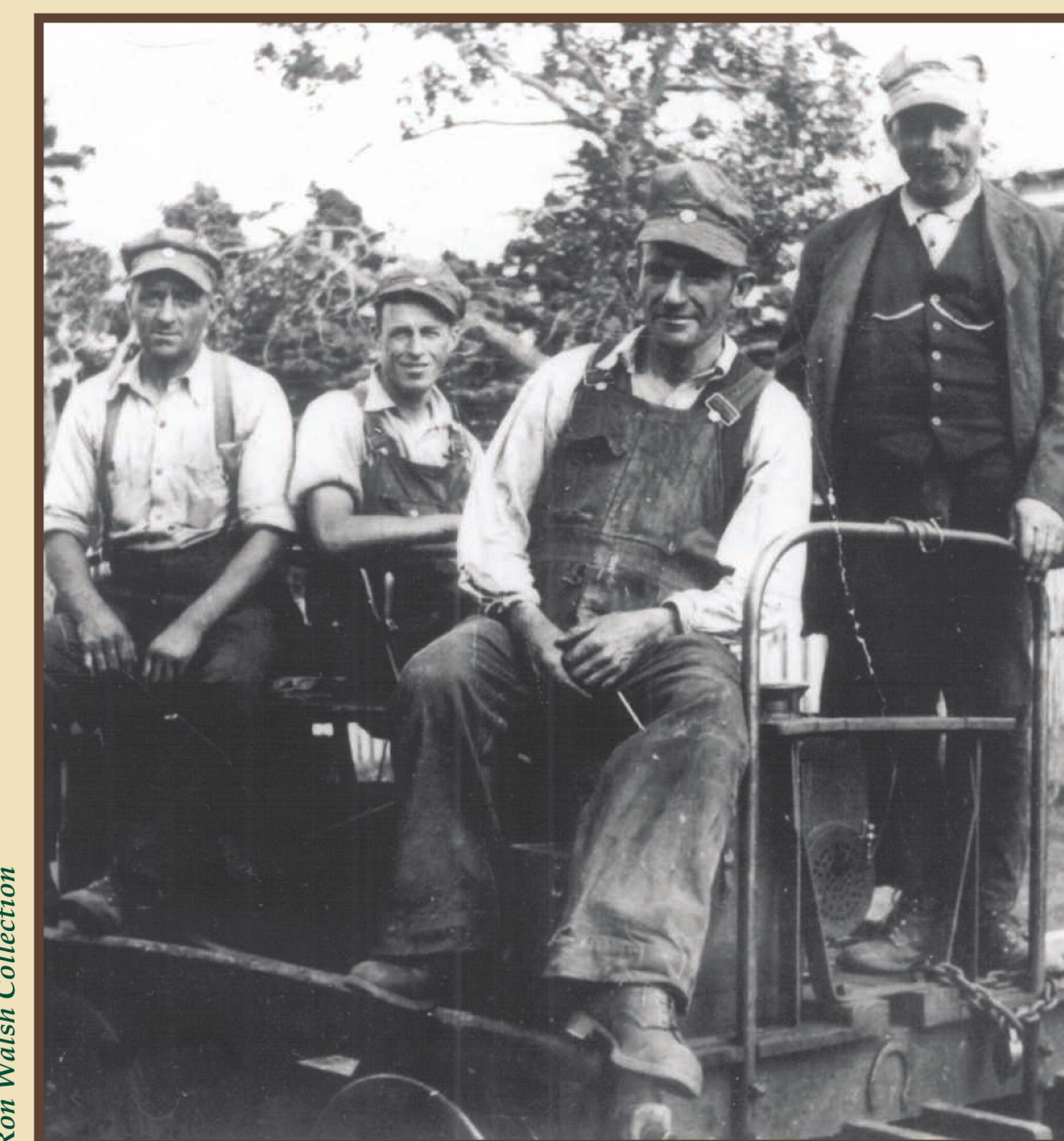
build a narrow-gauge rail. Construction began in 1881, with 92 km / 57 mi built before Blackman went bankrupt in 1884. The rail line passed through the communities of the South Shore and the first train went over the line to Topsail on June 29, 1882. By the end of 1882, a regular schedule operated three times a week between St. John's and Holyrood.

Robert G. Reid became owner of the railway system in 1890 and completed the line to Port aux Basques by 1898 – a 28-hour train ride. Reid sold the money-losing system to the Newfoundland Government in 1923, which refurbished the rail bed, rebuilt or replaced most of the worn out equipment, and substantially reduced annual deficits. The Government of Canada became responsible for operating the railway under the Terms of Union. The Newfoundland Government agreed to the "roads for rails" deal, in exchange for \$800 million in federal funding. The last train ran on September 30, 1988.



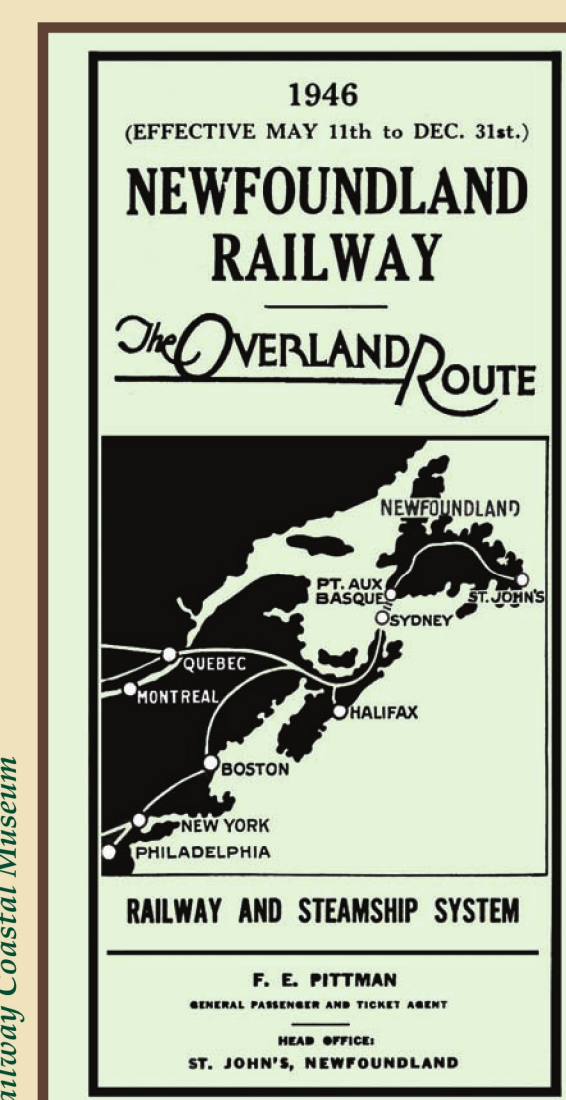
Railways Coastal Museum

An Trans-island Railway route 1898 map.

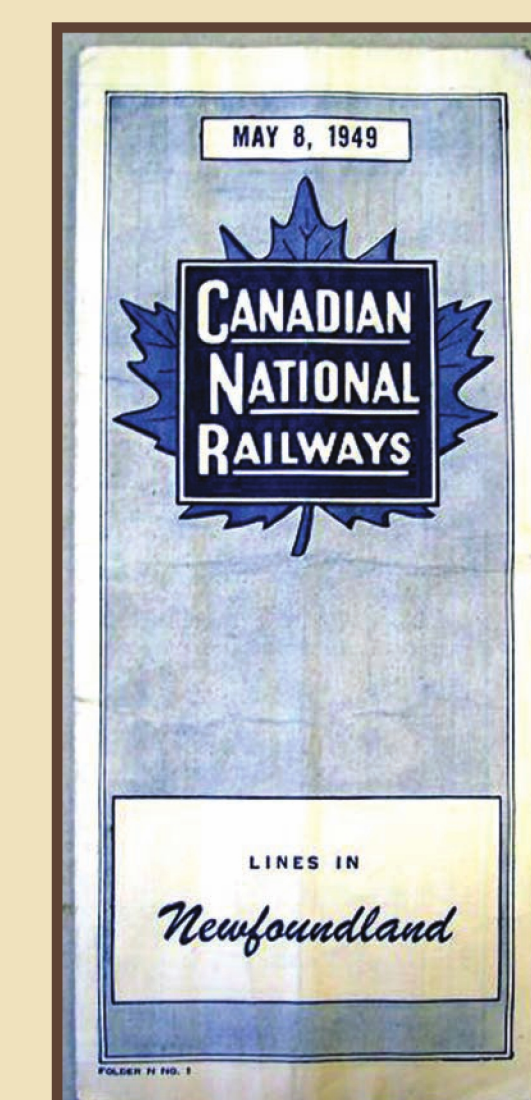


Ron Wolfe Collection

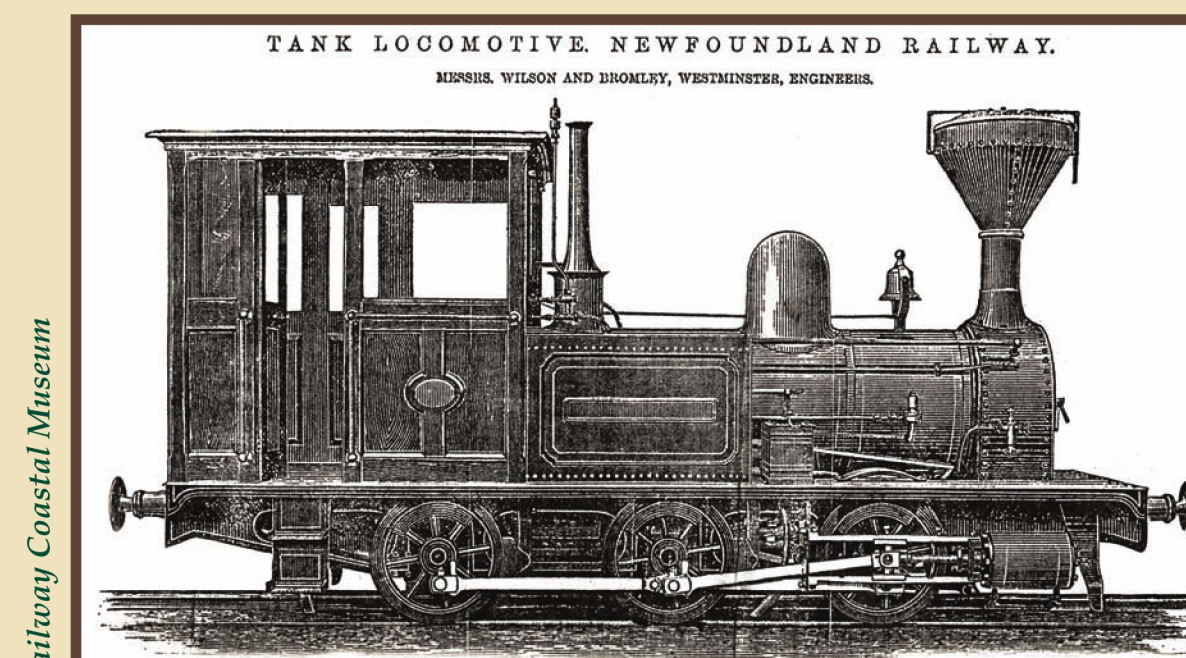
The 1942 "Section Crew" members that worked the line between Kelligrews and Irvine (Paradise).



Railways Coastal Museum

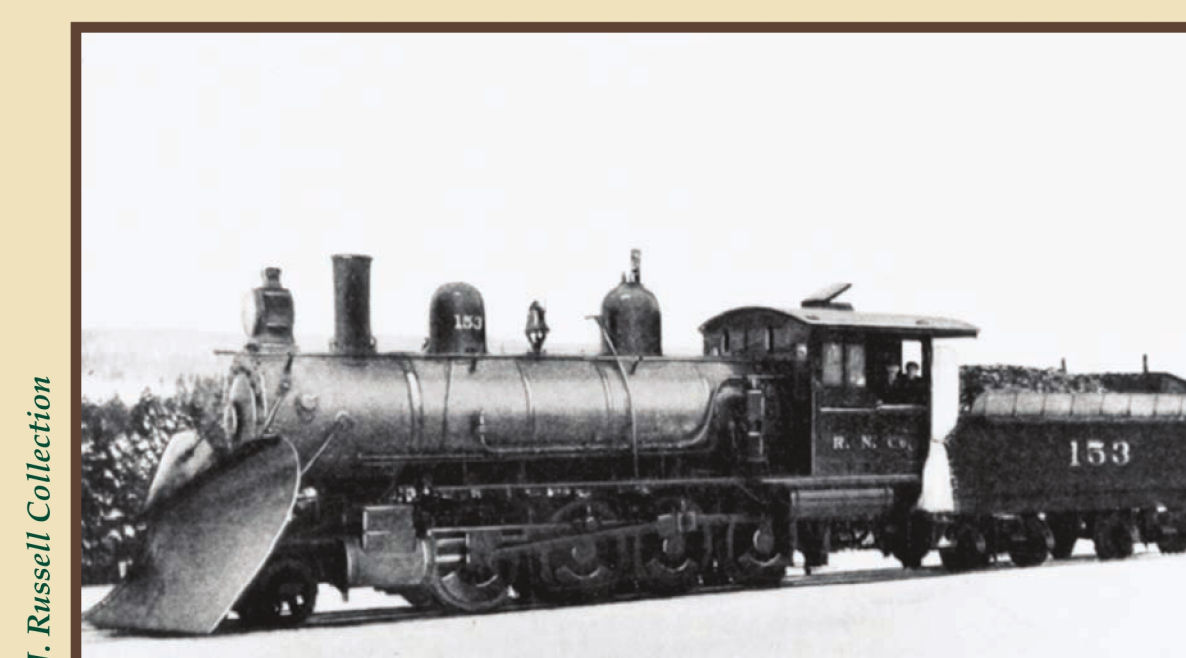


Railway timetables from a bygone era.



Railways Coastal Museum

The first locomotives used by the Newfoundland Railway Company came from the P.E.I. Railway.



J.L. Russell Collection

The last engine built in Newfoundland by the Reid's was locomotive #153 in 1921.



Railways Coastal Museum

Locomotives like the Halls Bay #4, a Mogul 2-6-0 were built in the 1890s.



Railways Coastal Museum

Day Coaches (Hijney) had their own engine and were used in the 1920s and 1930s for commuters as far as Kelligrews.



Railways Coastal Museum

Mikado 1000 Class locomotives were used from 1930 to 1949.