

St. Lunaire- Griquet



Nelson Taylor White Cape Harbour

--Photos by Kathleen Tucker--



A view of White Cape Harbour and Edgar Taylor's house in the distance



Nelson Taylor (left) looks out his window at the harbour

A Family of Fishermen

Nelson Taylor's father Richard was a trap fisherman, but they mostly fished hook and line. Richard fished with a trap along with John Weir, Nelson's maternal grandfather, for a few years, and they had a crew of four.

Following are the trap berths at Griquet Harbor, White Cape Harbor, and Lower Griquet, as remembered by Nelson Taylor.

Trap Berths at White Cape Harbour

1. Herring Cove: 1a) Back Cove Point 1b) Back Cove Shoal
2. Uncle Joe's berth: (Joe Bussey)
3. Gap Point
4. Northwest Point
5. Griquet Island
6. Shoal Point

7. Big Head
8. Shoal North
9. Shoal South
10. Wild Cove
11. Prune Island: (in later years)
12. Grassy Cove: (2nd berth)
13. Lighthouse Point
14. Tom Head's Point: (in Fortune)
15. Brewers' Cove: (Fortune)
16. Solomon's Point
17. Back Cove Shoals
18. Black Rock Gulch
19. Ballast Cove
20. Fortune Point: the best trap berth



View of the Cape from Taylor's window.

Noah Patey St. Lunaire



Noah Patey (left) at Griquet and Scott Burden (right), splitting fish. Photo by Glenda Burden.

Fisherman, contractor, and heavy equipment operator

Noah Patey, son of Samuel Patey of St. Lunaire-Griquet, was born in 1933 and, he remembers, fish weren't always plentiful, so he did whatever work he could to support his family. He married Joyce Earle in 1952 and they had ten children. Come summer he'd fish, and in the fall he'd put away his fishing gear and work at building a house, a shed or a boat for somebody. Other times he had to go away to get work.

He drove a bulldozer for Lundrigans in the mid-60s when the roads were being built, and when Hydro came through in 1969 he went to work at the Power Plant in Griquet. He recalls that at the end of a work day he'd often go fishing with his boys.

Until the Moratorium, the fishery was always there for men to fall back on. Noah and his brothers had 'trap-fished with his father and, later, when his sons were old enough, they fished with Noah. Not all fishermen were honest, however. He recalls, in the days when he was a trap fisherman, some fishermen were known to 'jig from someone else's trap, but it was a risky business. For one thing, the unscrupulous fisherman might lower the jigger too deep into the trap and it'd get caught and he'd lose his jigger. Later, when fishing crews hauled a trap they'd find a jigger in it, and they knew someone had been jigging fish—or had intended to jig fish—from their trap.



Joyce and Noah Patey

The year the ice came in

Many fishermen recall a year when the arctic ice moved in and made fishing from a boat well-nigh impossible. Many had to put aside their boats and traps, don a pair of thigh rubbers and fish with a trawl. Noah recalls the arctic ice moved into the bay and stayed for a couple of weeks. The ice that had been around all winter had slackened off in June, but on July 9th it had returned with a vengeance. “I remember,” he says, “because the young people from the community were heading to St. John’s for ‘summer school. They called it summer school then, but you’d call it college now. The Northern Ranger came in to pick up the students and couldn’t leave for two weeks.

“And the ice pushed the fish ahead of itself into the bay, and we could see—from our house in Joe’s Cove—big fish down at the rocks near the shore.

“I think the year was 1958 because I built my first motorboat that year. She was 26’ with a 6hp Acadia in her. Other fishermen brought their traps from Griquet, overland, so they could fish; and they used my motorboat because I didn’t have a trap at that time; we were fishing with hook and line.”

When Noah began trap fishing, he had an 8hp Acadia engine in his motorboat. He and his crew had an 8hp Acadia, a six and a five. Trap season started sometime in June, and when the trap season ended the fishermen went ⁱⁱⁱtrawling, or jigging, and they used two boats then. Certain years you could fish into September, but often you couldn’t catch fish after August.

Fishing crews in Noah’s father’s day

- Garland Bussey
- Sam Patey
- Billy and Fred Bussey

A common meal

When fishermen were out jigging, they often went ashore to cook a meal, which was usually ^{iv}jowls, ^vtongues, or fish. They’d fry it in pork and mix it with bread and onions. They might all eat from the same pot, or scoop it out on a flat rock and eat it that way. They often carved their own wooden spoons.



A wooden spoon hand-carved by Noah Patey

Local names

Occasionally there are discrepancies between published maps and local language. A name on a map may not coincide with names that fishermen called places. For instance:

Granchain Point on the map is called Southern Point by local fishers.

Salut Island on the map is called Bull Bar Island by local fishers.

Persil Cove on the map is called Fish Cove by local fishers.

Trap berths in St. Lunaire

Fish Cove (Persil Cove). There were three ^{vi}berths at Fish Cove: Andrew's Berth, Hussey's Rock, and Fish Cove Islands. Fish Cove was fished by Sam Patey, sons Noah, Allan and Leslie, and usually a shareman. Sam and his crew fished with two boats and two traps.

1. Andrew's Berth, possibly named for Andrew Colbourne. Prime berth.
2. Hussey's Rock. Prime.
3. Fish Cove Islands. Prime.
4. Shoal ^{vii}Tickle Island (at Long Cove). Prime.
5. Southern Point Cove. Prime. Named Granchain Point on current maps, but locally called Southern Point.
6. George's Rock.
7. South Shoal on Bull Bar Island (on the map, Salut Island). Prime.
8. North Shoal on Bull Bar Island. 2nd draw.
9. Bull Bar Island. 2nd draw.
10. Fish Cove Head in St. Lunaire Bay. 2nd.
11. Butler's Point. 2nd.
12. Dog Head at White Dog Point (on the map). Prime.
13. Lowlands. Prime.
14. Round Gulch. Prime.
15. Golden Cup. Prime.
16. Hospital Cove. 2nd berth at Hospital Point.

Photo Essay
An old fisherman's store
Rustic Relics of a Bygone Era
Photos by Kathleen Tucker



An old fisherman's storage shed



8 hp Make-and-break Engine



Trawl tub



Trawl tub sleigh used on the stage to haul a trawl tub full of salt-water



Gaffs



Half barrel tub with detachable hoist



Manila rope



Watch buoy, used on the end of a grapelin



Old Colburn's spice box and a 100 pound flour barrel, painted green



Molasses Cask



Ceylon (loose) tea boxes were handy boxes for storage



Cod liver oil was a common tonic in outport communities



A bailing bucket (left) and a bait tub (right)



A butter churn fashioned into a lunch pail for fishermen



Nets and ropes



Twin bailing buckets



An old iron pot for cooking on the stove



A twine jenny, which operated like a large spool and was suspended from the ceiling. Fishermen knitted theirs nets in the evening, so the twine jenny (or spin-me-jenny) was usually in the kitchen.



Twine needles were usually handcrafted by fishermen



The rotting skeleton of an old trap skiff lies forgotten in the long grass

Scott and Winston Burden Griquet



Scott Burden and son Caleb holding up codfish at Griquet. Photo by Glenda Burden

Trap fishing project

I would like to extend my thanks to Scott Burden of St. Lunaire-Griquet for suggesting this project. He mentioned in conversation that he was concerned that in a matter of years the old-timers who trap-fished on the Northern Peninsula would pass away, and that all memory of trap berths: their names, who fished them, their location, and the disputes that arose as a result of them, would pass into obscurity. It is my opinion this project was of immense value in that we have managed to capture much of this information before it is too late.



Winston Burden at the splitting table, Griquet

Trap berths in Griquet

1. Back Cove Rock (Once the Draw System was in effect, no matter which skipper drew this berth, Cyril Peyton always traded with them because it was closest to his home). 2nd draw.
2. Back Cove Point (terrible place—^{viii}fouly or bad bottom; subject to tides). This berth was not included in most draws because of its bad bottom.
3. White Cape: ^{ix}tidey; difficult berth to work, used only in later years when trap crews increased.
4. Herring Cove: Don Saunders used to always place his inside “V” ashore.
5. Uncle Joe’s berth (might have been named for Joe Bussey).
6. Uncle Henry’s berth (might have been named for Henry Weir).
7. Northwest Point. Alec Hillier told Scott that Ford Elms, who was a merchant with a trap crew, always liked to get Northwest Point. Heman Earle used to work the traps with Ford Elms.
8. Griquet Island berth; a ^xtidey berth. When they put it back in, Uncle Ralph Pilgrim worked it in the early 1980s.
9. Shoal Point. Selby Loder told Winston Burden to use a leader ^{xi}grapnel (white, so it could be seen) rather than a ^{xii}shorefast at this location.
10. Big Head. Deep water berth. They had to sink the traps here.
11. Shoals South. A prime outside berth that never failed.
12. Shoals North. Not a prime berth. John Bridger would trade for this berth.
13. Wild Cove Head.
14. Alcock’s Point.
15. Prune Island (Alec Hillier made the berth)
16. Wreck Cove Point.
17. Lighthouse Point.
18. Burn Head.
19. Sandy Gulch.
20. Grassy Cove. Bartlett family had gardens in Grassy Cove.
21. Inside Point.
22. Brewer’s Cove. Where fishermen cast for ^{xiii}capelin.
23. Tom Head’s Point. 2nd draw.
24. Harbour Rock.
25. Solomon’s Point. Ralph Pilgrim had a Japanese codtrap there, and one September in the 1980s he hauled 10,000 lbs.
26. Fortune Point. The best trap berth.
27. Back Cove Shoal.
28. Ballast Cove. Last berth ‘down the shore’ towards Quirpon.
29. Black Rock Gulch. Second best berth. 1987 was a bonanza year. Selby Loder and his crew brought in 300,000 lbs.

Tobe Hillier Lower Griquet

--Photos by Kathleen Tucker



Tobias (Tobe) Hillier studies nautical charts to identify trap berths at Lower Griquet

He loved Being on the Water

“When I was seven, eight, or nine, I used to fish with the ‘old fellow’, with hook and line. I was no more than 14 or 15 when I went out shareman with Bill Carroll. I loved being on the water. When I was four years old I didn’t want to get up clear of the water, and this is where I am all day long; I’m in my little cabin by the water until dark, every single day, rain or shine.

“I attended school but every minute was unbearable; a waste of my time. I didn’t need it. I don’t regret one minute of giving up school; I wasted too many years. Algebra was my downfall, so when I finished grade nine I gave it up. My parents were old and sick. My goal was to join the Navy.”



The neat little cottage Tobe Hillier spends his time in, down by the water

Hillier gestures to a dilapidated fishing premise across the water... “See that old red store? That’s where my father had a heart attack,” he says. “He was over at the shop getting some supplies when it happened, and he never worked again. He had asthma for 32 years. My mother died in 1972; he died in 1982, and I was there looking out to him, and every breath he

took was a terrible struggle.

“In the 1960s I set out on my own as a hook and line fisherman, and then went into gillnets. I had a couple of fellows with me, fishing from a motor boat with the make-and-break engine. Then I built myself a speedboat, and three or four years before the Moratorium I started trap fishing. I had two or three fellows to help me with trap fishing, and I had one trap. At the last I got a Japanese cod trap, but the fishery was failing then, and a year or so later it closed. I was lucky enough to sell the Japanese trap to another fellow for almost the price I paid for it. I fished from the same place my ancestors fished from...right here where we are now.”



Putting codfish out on the flake to dry, right down by the water where he grew up, and where he spends all his time.

Primary fishing crews in Lower Griquet

- Mick Bartlett
- Bill Carroll
- John Bridger
- Everett Parsons
- Selby Loder
- Rol Manuel



From his cabin, Tobe is always within sight and sound of the water

Local Names

Black Rock on the map is called Griquet Island by local fishers
Griquet Island on the map is called Allettes Island by local fishers.

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20. Fortune Point: the best trap berth



Figure 1 St. Lunaire-Griquet-Fortune nautical chart

ⁱ Trap fish: A type of fixed fishing-gear used in inshore waters, box-shaped, with a length of net stretching from shore to entrance through which migrating cod (and salmon) enter and are trapped.

ⁱⁱ Jig: To fish by jerking an unbaited, weighted hook sharply upwards through the water where cod are swarming.

ⁱⁱⁱ Trawl: a buoyed line, of great length, to which short lines with baited hooks are attached at intervals.

^{iv} Jowls: the cheeks of a codfish.

^v Tongues: cod tongues.

^{vi} Berth: a particular station on fishing grounds, assigned by custom or lot to a vessel, boat, crew or family.

^{vii} Tickle: A narrow salt-water strait, as in an entrance to a harbour or between islands or other land masses, often difficult or treacherous to navigate because of narrowness.

^{viii} Fouly: Rough or rocky condition of the sea-bed, harmful to fishing nets.

^{ix} Tidy: said of a stretch of water, especially fishing grounds, subject to the turbulence of ocean currents and the ebb and flow of the tide.

^x Tidy: Of a stretch of water, especially fishing grounds, subject to the turbulence of ocean currents and the ebb and flow of the tide.

^{xi} Grapnel: A small anchor having four or more 'claws.'

^{xii} Shorefast: line and mooring attaching cod-trap or seal-net to the land.

^{xiii} Capelin: A small, iridescent deep-water fish like a smelt which, followed by the cod, appears inshore during June and July to spawn along the beaches, and is netted for bait, for manuring the fields, or dried, salted, smoked or frozen for eating.