

BIND

Notes on the Forward's.

From the information in our files, it would seem that the first settlers of this family did go to Grand Bank. It is also more or less certain that they came from the area around Sturminster Newton in Dorset. This could be checked out by contacting the Dorset County Records Office, Dorchester, Dorset, England.

It is probable, however, that the Forwards arrived in Grand Bank before 1800 - note the first birth recorded in 1793. I cannot discover for sure that Ambrose was the father of George but it does seem most likely. On the other hand Ambrose's wife Frances was only born in 1778. Would she have had a child when only 15 years of age? or was there possibly another, now forgotten Forward in Grand Bank at the end of the 18th century.

Although there is no directly traceable connection between the Forwards of Grand Bank and those of Carbonear, the fact that both families used the same range of Christian names is an almost certain indicator of relationship. I would therefore say that the Forwards of both places were quite closely related.

I doubt however that three cousins, Charles, George and John came out to Newfoundland with them. From our files it would appear that the man most closely contemporary with Ambrose was JAMES of Carbonear and he would probably have arrived there between 1800 and 1812. They may indeed have been cousins. However, Charles and George who first appear in the 1820's may not have been of the same generation. They may have been sons of James - or younger brothers. Note that the only reference found to a John Forward occurs in St. John's in 1787. He would indeed have been exactly contemporary, (possibly slightly older) with Ambrose of Grand Bank, but very little is known of him. He was not living in St. John's in 1794-5, neither do any Forwards appear in St. John's marriage registers before 1820. Indeed since the Forwards were a Dorset family it is difficult to see what John would be doing in St. John's which at that period was dominated by people from Ireland and South Devonshire.

Although the Forward family of Grand Bank became quite prominent as Planters and later banking schooner owners, their early years were far more obscure. They do not seem to have been shipowners of any sort until perhaps the middle of the 19th century which means they were by no means important people in Grand Bank. Other families - Hickman, Forsey, Snook, etc. were well to the fore. Yet in contrast the Carbonear people are more well established. James was a planter - a middle man between the fish merchants and the poor and property-less fishermen. As a Schooner owner, he would have engaged in the Labrador cod and seal fisheries, and of course engaged in the coastal trade for himself and others. This entailed the hiring of men, and he was thus of some independence - although probably he relied on one of the Conception Bay fish merchants for supplies, at least in the early stages of his career. Charles and George were much higher in the scale. There is no evidence that they engaged in the supply and fish exporting trade at least during the 1820's. They certainly owned no deep sea vessels. However, they owned two or three vessels which engaged in the seal and cod fishery and in coastal voyages, and may at times have chartered their vessels to the larger "fish" merchants who wanted a vessel to bring in supplies or export fish.

By 1840 George Forward is clearly expanding steadily and as the attached notes show, is a ship-owner of some substance. I suspect, however,

that he was still not heavily engaged in the export of fish and concentrated mainly on the seal and cod fishery - obtaining most of his supplies from other merchants, and in turn disposing of his fish in Newfoundland. This was quite typical of the time. A man begins as a fisherman, becomes a "skipper", purchases his own vessel, then buys another one and then enters the seal fishery on his own account. The final step (which Forward may have taken by 1847) is to outfit other schooner owners for the seal -fishery.

Note finally the other George Forward in St. John's during the 1820's and 30's. As a sailmaker he stands apart from the others for they were all directly engaged in the fishery. Was he related? He probably was but the degree is extremely uncertain. By 1800 there were many Forwards scattered around the West of England and he may have had little close relationship with the others who came to Newfoundland.

Extracts from the FORWARD file.

Christian Name. AMBROSE.

1. First one as you say, of Sturminster Newton or District.
2. Married Frances Soper (1778-1842, a Methodist, in Grand Bank.
3. CHILDREN. George, born 1793, died 1799.
John, born 1796.
George, born 1802. Died 1846, married Esther Soper. (1809-1884).
Charles, born 1805.
Henry, born 1806, died 1807.
Ambrose born and died 1808.
Lambert, born 1809. (married 1833 Hanna Cox, of St. John's, moved to Burgeo.
Robert Augustus, born 1814.
4. No further specific information on him.

AMBROSE (two).

1. At Carbonear.
1845 Commanded the brig. WILLIAM IV on a sealing voyage for George Forward.

HENRY of Carbonear.

- 1847 Commanded the BRITON 152 tons 42 men, a Carbonear sealing vessel owned by George.

MARK of Carbonear.

1. 1844 Commander of the brig. WILLIAM of Carbonear. Married Mary, daughter of the merchant William Wills Bemister.
2. 1877 (son of above?) married Ann Davis of Carbonear (Anglican).

GEORGE of Carbonear.

1. The well-known merchant.
2. In the 1820's in partnership with CHARLES (see below). Charles seems to have been sen for partner.
3. 1823 1823 with Charles signed petition from Carbonear complaining of the lack of law and order there during the winter.
4. 1825 1825 George and Charles MERCHANTS registered their first ship; the AMBROSE (note the name), a schooner of 59 tons Old Measurement, built in Cargonear by George Strickland. Commanded by Richard Clark.
5. 1825 this vessel registered anew.
6. 1826 with Charles, registered the JOSEPH a schooner of 80 tons built at New Harbour, Trinity Bay by William Williams.

CHRISTIAN NAME (continued).

GEORGE of Carbonear.

7. This vessel LOST at sea.
8. 1826 with Charles registered the MARY, built in Freshwater, Conception Bay in 1818. Capt. John Clark.
9. 1841 This vessel broken up.
10. 1828 Signed a petition protesting against the imposition of any new taxes.
11. There is little information presently available on this firm during the 1830's but in 1842 recording himself as residing at HARBOUR GRACE, George purchased shares in a projected Newfoundland Steam Navigation Company .
12. 1845 At Carbonear, outfitted 5 vessels for the seal fishery. (note by this time Charles has dropped out of the business).
13. 1846. At Carbonear sent 6 vessels to the seal hunt.
14. 1847. Sent the following vessels sealing:
 1. BRITON. Capt. Henry 152 tons, 41 men.
 2. WILLIAM IV - Capt. Ambrose Forward, 135 tons 39 men.
 3. SAMUEL - Capt. Samuel Taylor 140 tons, 38 men.
 4. HORTA - Capt. James Pelley, 117 tons, 32 men.
 5. JUBILEE - Capt. James Colbourne, 86 tons, 27 men.
 6. FORTITUDE Capt. Henry Taylor, 88 tons, 27 men.

GEORGE of St. John's.

1. 1824 A Member of the Fire Company of the Lower district of St. John's
2. A Sailmaker in partnership with an Irishman called Power.
3. 1831 31st. Dec. Their partnership dissolved and he dropped out. of the business, leaving Power to continue.
4. 1833 A Petty Juror for the Central District Court.
5. 1837 Member of the Committee of Relief of the Association of fishermen and shoremen of St. John's.

Charles of Carbonear. (see details given in George above).

CHRISTIAN NAME.

JAMES of Carbonear (one).

1. 1814-16 Commanded the TYRO, a coasting schooner or 40 tons and 4 men.
2. 1825 Described as "of Carbonear", Planter registered the TYRO again. Now said to be of 49 tons built in Conception Bay in 1804 and owned by HIMSELF.
3. 1827 This vessel was registered anew.
He seems to have disappeared thereafter.

JAMES of Carbonear (two).

1. 1847 Commanded the SALLY of 101 tons and 35 men.
Made a sealing voyage for John Rorke of Carbonear.

JOHN in St. John's.

1. 1787 A trader in St. John's. Signed a petition in favour of having more public houses. A very obscure man of whom nothing more is known.