

**Fish Worth Fighting For:
The Struggle for Control of the Newfoundland Fisheries
(1500-1800)
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Abstract

The Atlantic cod that swam in the Grand Banks and along the coasts of Newfoundland played a significant role in the British Empire. The Newfoundland fisheries that developed following European exploration of the region in the early sixteenth century remained disputed areas for centuries. To Britain and France, the fisheries represented potential wealth and power, and soon, both countries were clamoring for rights to the island of Newfoundland and the waters surrounding it. During the eighteenth century, Britain and France engaged in several major wars against one another. Each war ended with peace treaties that included articles addressing the Newfoundland fisheries. The Peace of Utrecht in 1713, which concluded the War of Spanish Succession, granted Britain sovereignty over the island of Newfoundland, but France retained fishing rights. The Seven Years' War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 which transferred large areas of French North America over to British control. Despite Britain's tremendous territorial gains and France's considerable losses, both countries continued to occupy the Newfoundland fisheries, although the French possessions were considerably reduced. The American Revolutionary War brought significant changes to the British Empire. With the emergence of the new United States of America, three countries now had access to the Newfoundland fisheries as laid out in the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1783. Each war and subsequent peace treaty brought diplomatic changes to the fisheries, but none of the peace treaties resolved the continual clash of empires in the fishing regions surrounding Newfoundland. The presence of the Newfoundland fisheries in every peace treaty between Britain and France throughout the eighteenth century highlights their value to those involved in the negotiations. Cartography depicting the North Atlantic region also contributed to the struggle for control of the area. Maps were used to support the various claims of European nations. The

Newfoundland fisheries' role in the British North Atlantic trade network demonstrated their importance to the emerging Empire. Throughout the eighteenth century, the fish that swam along the coasts of Newfoundland became fish worth fighting for.

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Introduction

The British Isles and the island of Newfoundland sit facing each other across the Atlantic Ocean. As an island, Great Britain has always relied heavily on fishing, and the Newfoundland fisheries provided the emerging British Empire with what appeared to be an unlimited supply.¹ It is no coincidence that Newfoundland became one of Britain's first overseas settlements, and that its capital, St. John's, is one of the oldest cities in North America.² Of course, this new trade needed to be protected, and thus, the British Empire developed into a maritime power that sought to control the seas.³ The cod caught along the coasts of Newfoundland and in the Grand Banks became a symbol of the early British Empire and represented an important part of its history. Today, tourists to St. John's can kiss a stuffed codfish as part of local tradition.⁴ During the late fifteenth century, England developed a permanent connection to Newfoundland that was strengthened over the next centuries through trade and peace negotiations. This connection between the two islands was based in Newfoundland's rich fisheries. The fisheries generated a trade route that England believed was worth protecting at any cost. As England strengthened its navy to protect its new Atlantic trade network, Newfoundland became a cornerstone of the emerging British Empire.

David Armitage argues that the term "empire" is a "modern [category] that has been projected anachronistically on to the early-modern period." Early modern European scholars were familiar with the *Imperium Romanum*, and the concept of "empire" transposed from Roman military command to the general concept of "rule" over territories. The process was slow, and

¹ Jeremy Black, *The British Seaborne Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 8.

² Mark Kurlansky, *Cod* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 178, 188.

³ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 8. Black's book presents a great history of the emerging British Empire as a maritime empire that believed in the importance of a strong navy to protect trade.

⁴ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 189.

the term “British Empire” did not reach the vernacular until the latter half of the eighteenth century.⁵ However, the roots of the Empire can be traced from the late seventeenth century. By that point, England was becoming an imperial power through its transatlantic trade network system and developing North American and Caribbean colonies. In 1707, the Act of Union officially formed “Great Britain.”⁶

The eighteenth century was an innovative time for Great Britain. By the century’s end, Britain had developed the strongest navy in the world. Military and economic expansion went together during this period dominated by sea power. This century witnessed a “British world system” that came to be referred to as a “British Empire.”⁷ The rise of nationalist fervor among Britain and its British colonists in North America and the Caribbean grew into a common ideology of “empire.”⁸ The Seven Years’ War at mid-century marked this change. After the war, “it was conventional to speak and write of a single British Empire.”⁹ This first British Empire included Great Britain, Ireland, and its colonies in North America and the Caribbean. It was not until after the American Revolutionary War that Britain turned its focus towards Asia in what can be classified as the rise of the second British Empire.¹⁰ During the eighteenth century, the first British Empire witnessed an exponential increase in the rate of territorial and economic growth, and the next generations benefited from a well-developed Atlantic trade system protected by a strong navy. By the nineteenth century, the “British Empire” came to mean, in P.J.

⁵ David Armitage, “Literature and Empire,” in *The Origins of Empire*, ed. Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 103 (quote), 104, 113.

⁶ G. E. Aylmer, “Navy, State, Trade, and Empire,” in *The Origins of Empire*, 467.

⁷ Wm. Roger Louis, “Forward,” in *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P.J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), viii.

⁸ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 170-71.

⁹ P. J. Marshall, “Introduction,” in *The Eighteenth Century*, 7.

¹⁰ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 1-2.

Marshall's words, "a collection of territories and peoples ruled by Britain."¹¹ This common phraseology has a history as unique and comprehensive as the Empire itself. It is important when analyzing eighteenth-century sources to begin with a basic understanding of the ideology behind the thoughts, phrases, and political and economic concepts of that period. How does one begin to examine a map without first deciphering the key? Therefore, the concept of "empire" is equally as important to study as the Empire itself. Once the ideological groundwork has been laid, the policies that built the British Empire can be examined.

Great Britain advocated a blue-water policy based upon trade. Projected as a stark contrast to the absolute monarchies in France and Spain, Britons took pride in their ability to expand their Empire through trade routes encouraged by their government that promoted liberty.¹² Of course, this "liberty" only extended to British colonists outside of the mainland and often excluded many people groups. Britain's blue-water policy dominated political and economic thoughts and actions throughout the eighteenth century. Warfare was common during this century. Between 1689 and 1815, Britain and France engaged in five major conflicts that Britain justified by claiming to maintain the "balance of power" in Europe. This policy promoted the "balance" of all European nations against one another so that no single country developed as the predominant force over the continent.¹³ France especially appeared dangerous to Britain whose Protestant, constitutional monarchy stood in stark contrast to the Catholic, absolute monarchy in France. Their close geographical proximity to one another across the English Channel and shared ancient historical ties dating back to the Norman Conquest only intensified their rivalry. The European "balance of power" policy was unstable at best, and Britain believed

¹¹ P.J. Marshall, "Introduction," 4.

¹² Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 144.

¹³ Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 96.

stability could only be achieved through maintaining it. During the eighteenth century, the European “balance of power” became the “particular interest and solemn obligation” of Britain.¹⁴ The Newfoundland fisheries, playing a major role in trade, were thus viewed under the lens of a blue-water policy that needed to be protected. Any disruption in trade could potentially lead to a disruption in the “balance of power” in Europe.

The Newfoundland fisheries were involved in every peace treaty negotiation between Britain and France during the eighteenth century.¹⁵ This important region saw more rhetorical warfare between dignitaries than physical warfare as multiple European countries claimed rights to the fisheries. The treaties themselves did not resolve the situation. To the contrary, starting with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which ceded the island of Newfoundland to Britain but left France with fishing rights, the fisheries became a contested area for the rest of the century and beyond.¹⁶ The dispute between Britain and France over the Newfoundland fisheries struck at the core of British political policy and economic ideology. The eighteenth century witnessed four major wars between the two countries, and each war ended with peace negotiations that involved claims to the fisheries. The history of the British Empire cannot be fully understood without the history of Newfoundland. Connected throughout the centuries, their relationship is best traced through the peace negotiations and subsequent treaties following Britain’s involvement in the major wars of the eighteenth century. Each treaty presented resolutions to past problems while also introducing new obstacles and restrictions. The Newfoundland fisheries symbolize the core principles of the British Empire and its devotion to naval strength that protected and promoted

¹⁴ Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), xvii, 4, 12-13 (quote).

¹⁵ Orville T. Murphy, “The Comte de Vergennes, The Newfoundland Fisheries, and the Peace Negotiations of 1783: A Reconsideration,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 46, no. 1 (March 1965): 32, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/568129>.

¹⁶ St John Chadwick, *Newfoundland* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 30-31.

trade. Growth in trade then yielded economic wealth and political stability, and political stability was believed to yield a balanced Europe. Little did the cod know that lived along the Newfoundland coast how much they influenced the destiny of Europe. The examination of the peace treaties from the British wars of the eighteenth century will show “there is no colony whose prosperity has been so much the sport of diplomacy as that of Newfoundland.”¹⁷

¹⁷ A. P. Newton, “Newfoundland, to 1783,” in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol VI Canada and Newfoundland, eds. J. Holland Rose, A. P. Newton, and E. A. Benians (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 121.

“New Found Land”

The North Atlantic Ocean which lies between Newfoundland and Europe is not easily crossed. The ocean floor reveals the story of many who have tried to sail across and failed, and yet, there is evidence that people have been traveling from Europe to Newfoundland for over a thousand years. It is easy to blame the fish. The waters around Newfoundland were filled with cod and other marine life which promised wealth and prosperity to all who caught them. However, Newfoundland also had other alluring qualities. The island is located at the opening of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Therefore, it served as a convenient place to dock before traveling further inland. The St. Lawrence River became one of the primary entrances into the North American continent.¹⁸ It also became a starting point for the unending quest for the fabled Northwest Passage. Once a permanently established route between Newfoundland and Europe formed, Newfoundland's importance surged. As the number of sailings between the two continents increased, the Atlantic became easier to cross. Crews learned how to navigate the currents and wind patterns, and maps provided information about banks and coastlines. Knowledge of the ocean encouraged additional voyages. Once the fish were caught, they were brought to shore to salt and dry. This brought Europeans onto the island, but most settlements were seasonal as fishermen returned to Europe with their cargos of fish to sell to an eager market.¹⁹

As the fishing trade grew, it contributed substantially to the emerging British Empire. The success of the fisheries poured wealth into the economy allowing capital support to grow for other trades. The fishing season required large numbers of (predominantly) men to sail across the Atlantic and back. The increase in labor provided the British Navy with skilled sailors when

¹⁸ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 10.

¹⁹ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 28-29.

needed.²⁰ Overall, the Newfoundland fisheries expanded Britain's knowledge of northeastern North America. This became one of the first regions where England established colonies outside of the British Isles. England, however, was not the first group from Europe to establish a settlement in Newfoundland. Centuries before John Cabot reached the coastline of North America, an adventurous group of skilled sailors found a new land.

L'Anse aux Meadows National Historical Site is located at the farthest northern point of Newfoundland. The site marks the spot of Viking artifacts found in the 1960s.²¹ According to Norse sagas, in 977, a Norwegian Viking named Gunnbjorn saw land in the far West when his ship was driven off course by storms. His adventure reached the ears of Erik the Red who, along with his father Thorwald, were banished from Norway for murder and then traveled westward and arrived in Iceland. After being forced to leave Iceland for the similar crimes, they sailed further west and came to Greenland around 985. Around 1000, Erik's son, Leif Eiriksson, sailed from Greenland to a place called "Stoneland." He then sailed south and reached "Woodland" and finally "Vinland." The exact location of "Vinland" is still debated although most historians place it in the general area of Labrador and Newfoundland, or at least in the Gulf of St. Lawrence region. The Norse sagas record up to five voyages to America between 985 and 1011. Cod can be found across the Atlantic from Norway to Canada, so it is possible the Vikings simply followed the fish. Viking sailors froze cod in the cold air and broke it into pieces to eat. For some unknown reason, the Viking settlements in present day Canada did not survive or were abandoned, and their history was unknown to western Europeans when Cabot sailed across the North Atlantic in the late fifteenth century.²² The fisheries off Iceland, however, were known to

²⁰ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 28-29.

²¹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 2.

²² Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 119-120; Kurlansky, *Cod*, 19-21.

the British from Norse history, and in the late Middle Ages, English expeditions to Iceland introduced sailors to that region of the North Atlantic and to the cod that lived in its waters.²³

The Atlantic cod, *Gadus morhua*,²⁴ is renowned in the North Atlantic region. The Labrador Current which runs south along the coast of Labrador towards Newfoundland brings the cold Arctic waters to the shallow banks where the cod thrive.²⁵ Cod enjoy the mixing of the cold Labrador Current with the warm Gulf Stream off the coast of Newfoundland. Here cod were caught by early Europeans in multitudes since the fish preferred to live in the shallow water found at the edge of the North American continental shelf. Basque fishermen came to know this area well. It is unknown when Basques first began fishing off the coast of Newfoundland. When the French explorer Jacques Cartier mapped the mouth of the St. Lawrence in 1534, there were Basque fishermen in the Gulf, and their expeditions to the region may have begun even before Columbus reached the Caribbean. The Basques salted the cod for preservation for their return voyages to Europe where the fish could be sold at market. The Basques had a pivotal role in the expansion of the cod trade throughout the European Atlantic region.

The cod trade inspired two Bristol merchants, Thomas Croft and John Jay, to finance two voyages in 1480 and 1481 in search of the famous fish, but whatever records they may have kept have been lost. Nevertheless, the ships returned with cod from an unknown area.²⁶ Historians were lost in speculation regarding the activities of the Bristol merchants until the discovery of the “John Day” letter. In 1955, a letter was found addressed to an “Admirante Mayor,” and it was signed by an individual named “John Day.” Since it was first found, historians have debated the

²³ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 17.

²⁴ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 18.

²⁵ A. P. Coleman and D. Jenness, “The Geographical and Ethical Background,” in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 3.

²⁶ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 21-22, 27-29, 42-43.

identity of the author and the recipient.²⁷ The letter appears to be written to Christopher Columbus, who was often addressed as “El Almirante Mayor,” but the evidence is still inconclusive.²⁸ “John Day” is thought to have been an English merchant named Hugh Say. Say came from a prominent London family and often traded between England and Spain. For some reason, he changed his name for a time while working as a merchant. Day’s letter was written during the winter of 1497/98 from Andalusia, Spain. It contains several important pieces of information regarding the activities of Bristol merchants in the North Atlantic. The letter details Cabot’s voyages and also mentions previous voyages across the Atlantic by Bristol merchants before Cabot. Day’s letter does not give a precise date for these voyages but only mentions that they occurred “en otros tiempos” which implies sometime in the past. Bristol merchants might have landed in North America by 1470 or earlier. Before Cabot’s voyage in 1497, Bristol merchants were traveling westward across the Atlantic in search of the mythical Isle of Brasil. It is possible some of them found Newfoundland by accident. If that were the case, however, the evidence suggests the location was lost sometime before 1497. John Day mentions rich fishing grounds in his letter, and Bristol merchants were probably trying to return to those areas. During this time, Bristol merchants were being driven out of Iceland by the Hanseatic League, so they needed a new place to catch fish. Cabot’s voyage provided them with new fishing grounds, or the rediscovery of old ones. The John Day letter provides a missing link between the Bristol merchants and the voyages of John Cabot. Day’s letter connects the area where John Cabot landed to the area where Bristol merchants used to catch fish “en otros tiempos.”²⁹

²⁷ Alwyn A. Ruddock, “John Day of Bristol and the English Voyages across the Atlantic before 1497,” *The Geographical Journal* 132, no. 2 (June 1966): 225, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1792337>.

²⁸ David B. Quinn, “John Day and Columbus,” *The Geographical Journal* 133, no. 2 (June 1967): 205, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1793272>.

²⁹ Ruddock, “John Day of Bristol,” 225-232, 230 (quote).

In the mid-fifteenth century, during the reign of King Edward IV, England saw an increase in ship building and overseas trade.³⁰ This growth continued under King Henry VII who, on March 5, 1496, granted the Italian merchant John Cabot a patent to sail west towards Asia.³¹ Cabot left Bristol in 1497 aboard his ship *Mathew*, and after thirty-five days, reached a “new found land” that he claimed for England. Cabot may have been looking for the long-lost Bristol merchant’s fishing grounds, but more likely, he was sent by the King in search of a spice route to Asia. Cabot studied previous travelers like Marco Polo, and Cabot believed he could reach Asia by sailing at a higher latitude. The *Mathew* probably landed in Newfoundland or Cape Breton Island where Cabot and his crew reported a sea full of cod. The cod demonstrated the prospect for wealth from the “new found land,” and in 1498, Cabot was granted another voyage westward by King Henry VII. He left this time with five ships, but no records remain of this voyage. Only one ship limped back to England while the other four ships, along with Cabot, were lost at sea.³²

While Cabot’s two voyages were hardly a success,³³ his report of the Newfoundland fishing banks encouraged other voyages to North America in the first years of the next century. In 1501, Cabot’s son, Sebastian, was granted a charter for a voyage.³⁴ He left England in 1508 attempting to complete his father’s goal of finding a route to Asia. It is possible Sebastian sailed as far northwest as Hudson Bay. When he returned to England, however, he learned King Henry VII had died, and he could not obtain license for another voyage. Despite not finding the elusive Northwest Passage to Asia, these early English explorations brought back knowledge of the

³⁰ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 27.

³¹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 3.

³² Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 27 (quote); Kurlansky, *Cod*, 28-29.

³³ Anthony Pagden, “The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c.1700,” in *The Origins of Empire*, 34.

³⁴ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 3.

North American coastline from Labrador to present day Massachusetts. A permanent route from England to the Newfoundland fisheries was established, and English fishermen rushed west towards new promises for wealth and new opportunities for trade.³⁵

Even as English fishermen flocked to Newfoundland, England was still several decades away from any attempt at colonization in North America.³⁶ The first voyages in the late fifteenth century were mainly for exploration of the fishing banks and the North American coastline. The goal remained to find a quick route to Asia and the establishment of an English-dominated spice trade route. English fishermen were not the only fishermen in the region at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Basque, French, Spanish, and Portuguese sailors were all fishing for cod off the coast of Newfoundland.³⁷ The Portuguese created the first maps of Newfoundland during this time. What England gained from the Newfoundland's waters was a rich fishing ground that eventually replaced its need for the fisheries off Iceland.³⁸ England's attention was turning to the West.

Even after the activities of Bristol merchants and the voyages of John Cabot, the English were not heavily active in the Americas at first compared to their European neighbors. France was the first to capitalize on the Newfoundland fisheries after Cabot's voyage, and Spain was already developing a vast Empire in the Americas. This contributed to the rivalry that arose and lasted for centuries between the three countries.³⁹ England acquired commodities through its previously established European networks and privateering, especially against Spanish ships and

³⁵ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 27-28.

³⁶ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 3.

³⁷ Peter C. Mancall, "Native Americans and Europeans in English America, 1500-1700," in *The Origins of Empire*, 330.

³⁸ Newton, "Newfoundland, to 1783," 120.

³⁹ D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, Vol.1 *Atlantic America, 1492-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 25; Pagden, "The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c.1700," 34.

ports. They did not attempt to establish their own trade networks between England and America until the early seventeenth century. However, opportunities arose for the fishing and merchant groups who continued to gain knowledge of the region throughout the sixteenth century.⁴⁰ The fishing industry in Newfoundland appeared immediately after John Cabot's return in 1497.⁴¹ However, conflicts between England and Scotland, and England and Ireland, during the Tudor period captured the attention of the English monarchs, so the fisheries were not heavily prioritized beyond the merchants and fishermen directly involved in the region.⁴²

Maritime routes had played an important role in the British Isles since the end of the Ice Age. Ships and seamen of ancient times contributed to the economy by establishing permanent connections between England and Northwest Europe. Eventually, English sailors made it to Iceland where they fished for cod. Throughout the fifteenth century, English merchants learned more about North Atlantic currents and wind patterns. This knowledge led to advancements in shipbuilding.⁴³ The search also continued for a Northwest Passage to Asia at higher latitudes. For England, the fifteenth century ended with optimistic curiosity. The sixteenth century saw an even greater increase in voyages across the Atlantic and the first attempts at colonization. This new century brought wealth in the form of cod, but it also introduced violence as different European countries sought to control the region and interactions with various Native peoples of the Americas turned deadly. Commercial competition and conflict often arise together. Another important aspect, cartography of the Americas, emerged in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth

⁴⁰ Nicholas Canny, "The Origins of Empire: An Introduction," in *The Origins of Empire*, 3-4.

⁴¹ Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries: The History of An International Economy*, revised edition (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1954), 11.

⁴² Nicholas Canny, "Preface," in *The Origins of Empire*, x-xi.

⁴³ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 18, 26.

century. The first known European-made maps of Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence region were created to depict two important facts: where the land was and who controlled it.

In 1500, Juan de la Coas created what is presumably the first European map to include Newfoundland. In his map, Newfoundland is not depicted as an island, but rather an extension of Labrador or possibly Greenland. De la Coas had sailed with Christopher Columbus on his first voyage in 1492. It is possible that Columbus showed de la Coas a sketch of John Cabot's findings in Newfoundland that he had received from John Day along with his letter. From 1500 to 1503, brothers Gaspar and Miguel Corte-Real also mapped their voyages around the coastline of Newfoundland. Maps soon depicted Newfoundland with its Portuguese name *Tierra dos Bacalaos* ("the lands of the codfish"). Some places in Newfoundland still have versions of their Portuguese names, like Cape Bonavista.⁴⁴

The Newfoundland fisheries became the location of a "gold rush."⁴⁵ Following the Portuguese were Breton and Norman fishermen.⁴⁶ La Rochelle became a major port where cod from Newfoundland entered European markets. During the first half of the sixteenth century, fishermen from La Rochelle accounted for over half of the voyages to Newfoundland. Soon sixty percent of the European fish market was Newfoundland cod. Most English fishermen still fished off the coast of Iceland, but conditions continued to deteriorate between England and the Hanseatic League. In 1532, after the murder of an Englishman in Grindavík, war broke out, and England began to abandon the Iceland fishery.⁴⁷ English fishing near Newfoundland increased as

⁴⁴ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 120-121; Quinn, "John Day and Columbus," 206-207.

⁴⁵ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 51 (quote).

⁴⁶ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 121.

⁴⁷ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 51-54.

French, Spanish, and Portuguese fishing decreased due to various wars they were involved in around mid-century.⁴⁸

Despite the increase in the number of ships sailing to the fisheries or exploring the Gulf of St. Lawrence region each year, the sixteenth century did not see any successful European colonization in the region. Since the beginning of the century, England and France had quarreled over the fisheries and control of the coastlines. A permanent colony was needed to establish control over the area. In 1541, Jacques Cartier, a French explorer, founded the settlement of Charlesbourg-Royal along the St. Lawrence River, but it failed due to sickness and attacks from local Native Americans. Even though, in 1608, Samuel de Champlain was finally able to build the colony of Québec, it remained a small outpost for the first twenty years. Nevertheless, New France was born, and the French had a permanent location from which they could control the region.⁴⁹

The second half of the sixteenth century saw an increase in English activity in Newfoundland. First, the English began feeding their navy with cod. Second, trade laws were passed that allowed English merchants to sell cod in foreign ports.⁵⁰ Both contributed to the increase in demand of Newfoundland cod. Third, in 1558, the last possession of England's medieval empire in France was lost. This represented a turning point in English history and marked the origins of a British North Atlantic seaborne empire.⁵¹ Last, from 1576 onward, hundreds of sailors risked their lives sailing north of Newfoundland in search of a Northwest

⁴⁸ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 122.

⁴⁹ Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, Vol 1 *Atlantic America*, 25-26, 33, 36.

⁵⁰ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 58-60.

⁵¹ John C. Appleby, "War, Politics, and Colonization, 1558-1625," in *The Origins of Empire*, 55.

Passage to the riches of Asia.⁵² Their overwhelming desire and relentless pursuit over the next centuries drove hundreds of ships to Newfoundland and beyond.

In 1576, English privateer Martin Frobisher sailed to Newfoundland in search of precious metals. He returned to England with black ore but later discovered that it did not contain any gold. Two other journeys in 1577 and 1578 produced similar dissatisfying results. Frobisher was accompanied on his journeys by George Best and James Beare. Best published a book in London, containing charts by Beare, illustrating geographical information obtained on the voyages.⁵³ In the book, Best included a world map which depicts “Frobushers Straighes” as a Northwest Passage leading directly to “Cathaia,” i.e., China⁵⁴ [see figure 1]⁵⁵. This depiction of a wide, navigable Northwest Passage contributed to the growing belief in England that such a passage existed. More expeditions were carried out to search for a route to Asia. Crews quickly learned that the freezing Arctic waters were unforgiving, and many ships and sailors were lost in their pursuit over the next four centuries. Nevertheless, Frobisher had lit the spark. His three voyages created a desire to expand trade beyond Europe in the hopes of finding precious metals, lands filled with profitable resources, and access to the spices of Asia. The route to Newfoundland and North America had been established, and England’s North Atlantic trade network was created.

During the last decades of the sixteenth century, the Newfoundland fishing industry slowly began to spread from sea to land. Salt fueled the rivalry between England and France in Newfoundland. France had access to large amounts of salt, which England did not, and therefore,

⁵² Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 42.

⁵³ Seymour Schwartz, *The Mismatching of America* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 79-81.

⁵⁴ George Best, [No Title] *World Map, Woodcut, 215 x 395mm* [Map], in *The Mismatching of America*, by Seymour Schwartz (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 114 (figure 25).

⁵⁵ See image in Appendix.

England had to resort to dry fishing which required less salt. Fish were lightly salted and dried on shore before being transported to England. France heavily salted green fish from the banks and returned home to dry them. England's limited access to sufficient salt supplies caused fishermen to shift from sea to the shores of Newfoundland to dry their fish creating an English dry fishing industry on land. English fishermen set up temporary fishing grounds on the Avalon Peninsula, in the southeast corner of Newfoundland, to salt and dry their catch. The move to land began as just a small transition from sea to shore, and the fishing grounds were still inhabited only during the fishing season. This presence on land in Newfoundland, however, soon encouraged ideas of colonization and permanent occupation as both England and France experienced a growth in trade. England's fishing trade spread to Spain and the Mediterranean markets while France focused on the fur trade from the St. Lawrence region.⁵⁶ Both countries needed a more permanent solution to protect the growing trade industries in North America. Conflicts arose as the land-grab began, and as usual, the Native population of the region was not consulted.

As the fishing industry grew in Newfoundland, fishermen from each country slowly gravitated towards specific areas on the island. The English established themselves at St. John's while the French moved into Placentia. Englishmen Anthony Parkhurst explored the inner island to test the sustainability of different crops. He wrote to Queen Elizabeth I to encourage annexation of the island.⁵⁷ As the English fishing trade grew and more individuals pressed for annexation, Elizabeth's government realized that action needed to be taken to bring Newfoundland under more direct control.⁵⁸ Sir Humphrey Gilbert directed the first significant attempt at colonization in Newfoundland. Gilbert had previously attempted colonization efforts

⁵⁶ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 49-51.

⁵⁷ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 122-23.

⁵⁸ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 5.

in Ireland with no success. In 1578, he was granted a patent from Queen Elizabeth I, but his first voyage was thwarted by bad weather, and he and his crew were forced to return to England. In 1583, Gilbert attempted to reach Newfoundland once more and this time made landfall on the island. He arrived on August 3rd to the displeasure of the fishermen already on the island. Gilbert claimed Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth I and got to work ordering the fishermen and their crews to various fishing grounds, or “rooms,” in St. John’s harbor and its surrounding areas. He disembarked on August 20th, but his ship was lost on the return voyage. England’s first attempt at colonization in Newfoundland failed, and the situation on the island remained relatively unchanged for the immediate future.⁵⁹ The first settlements continued as an assortment of fishing grounds comprised of various countries occupying different areas. In fact, the fishermen who managed to avoid the last fleet home at the end of the season and wintered on the island could be considered the first European settlers in Newfoundland. Both King James I and his successor, Charles I, granted charters to Newfoundland, but the population remained small over the next century.⁶⁰ Slowly, more sailors stayed though the winter on the island, and the fishing season began to extend year-round.⁶¹ Even though Gilbert’s venture did not generate an English colony in Newfoundland, there were other ways to claim ownership and exert control over overseas territories.

Maps produced in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries played an important role in the early European exploration of North and South America. Maps were commonly drawn as visual representations of sovereign authority over peoples and lands. Whenever European explorers ventured across the Atlantic to claim territory in the name of their respected

⁵⁹ Pagden, “The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c.1700,” 34; Newton, “Newfoundland, To 1783,” 123-24; Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 5.

⁶⁰ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 5.

⁶¹ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 43.

monarch, maps were quickly constructed to depict the newly claimed regions. European's lack of complete geographical knowledge of the region only contributed to the widely contested, often overlapping, claims between countries. Territorial authority could be expanded or contracted by the hand of the cartographer. Two English maps during this time exemplify the European ideology that maps established dominion and expressed sovereignty.⁶²

John Dee, an English cartographer, created a map for Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1582 that shows the Northern Hemisphere including England, North America, and Cathaia⁶³ [see figure 2].⁶⁴ Dee's map promotes the idea of a wide Northwest Passage above North America as well as portrays a lengthy St. Lawrence River connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This belief in a Northwest Passage to Asia (Cathaia) supported Gilbert's plan to colonize Newfoundland. Maps were often used for political propaganda. In order to control the Northwest Passage, England needed a strong position at the opening of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Newfoundland presented the perfect location. Dee's map was a visual representation of Gilbert's political agenda.⁶⁵

Another English cartographer, John Mason, constructed a map of Newfoundland to illustrate English authority over the island⁶⁶ [see figure 3].⁶⁷ His map, first published in 1625, includes several features that emphasize England's claims of sovereignty. The map includes the

⁶² Ken MacMillan, "Sovereignty 'More Plainly Described': Early English Maps of North America, 1580-1625," *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 4 (October 2003): 426, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/376461>.

⁶³ John Dee, *John Dee/Humphrey Gilbert map of the Northern Hemisphere, 1582* [Map], in "Sovereignty 'More Plainly Described': Early English Maps of North America, 1580-1625," by Ken MacMillan, 422 (figure 4), *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 4 (October 2003): 413-447, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/376461>.

⁶⁴ See image in Appendix.

⁶⁵ MacMillan, "Sovereignty 'More Plainly Described'," 419-22.

⁶⁶ John Mason, *John Mason's map of Newfoundland as it appeared in William Vaughan, The Golden Fleece, 1626* [Map], in "Sovereignty 'More Plainly Described': Early English Maps of North America, 1580-1625," by Ken MacMillan, 443 (figure 9), *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 4 (October 2003): 413-447, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/376461>.

⁶⁷ See image in Appendix.

royal coat of arms to indicate that the land is under the dominion of King Charles I. Also, the insert in the bottom left corner details the history of the island and how several English explorers established control of the island for the crown of England. English place names cover the map. English cartographers used maps to display to all of Europe their authority and power over newly explored regions of North America. While much of the region actually remained unexplored and unsettled by the Europeans themselves, maps depicted vast territories belonging to various monarchs. This use of cartography to illustrate a growing overseas empire was a powerful tool that carried over into the next centuries.⁶⁸ As more about the region's geography was learned, European countries rushed to establish settlements and exploit the land's natural resources. Maps encouraged the competition for North American territory. European monarchs wanted to protect their trade routes across the Atlantic, and they had plenty of reasons to need protection. As cartographers disputed territories with maps and charts, the seas presented another story. Ships armed for battle left ports in Europe bound for North America. If dominion was going to expand beyond the European continent, so then was the desire to defend it.

France and Portugal dominated the fishing banks off Newfoundland in the first half of the sixteenth century. The second half of the century saw the rise and fall of Spanish fishermen and eventual domination by the English. As with most Atlantic trading during this century, privateering played a significant role. In 1585, Bernard Drake raided the Newfoundland fisheries which caused the Portuguese to abandon much of the fishing area. Drake also attacked Spanish ships, but the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 had the greatest impact on the Spain's weakened presence in Newfoundland. England took full advantage of the decline of its competitors and increased its presence in the fisheries. France, however, kept strong ties to the

⁶⁸ MacMillan, "Sovereignty 'More Plainly Described'," 442-43, 447.

fishing banks. Throughout the sixteenth century, England was steadily growing its new trade network in Newfoundland. By the end of the century, the fishing industry was experiencing exponential economic growth. This growth solidified a trade network connecting Newfoundland to England and its trade partners in Europe.⁶⁹ As trade increased, so did the need to protect it. More ships began to cross the Atlantic, and those ships needed to be able to defend themselves from attacks.

Britain eventually dominated the seas by the eighteenth century, but the improvements to naval artillery and navigation techniques developed gradually over the centuries. During the late sixteenth century, England saw the rise of the production of iron guns due to the growing iron industry. Also during this time, English sailors began to learn how to navigate the difficult North Atlantic currents. While Newfoundland was closer to England than other European countries, a transatlantic crossing to the island required sailors to sail directly into the cruel North Atlantic winds. Even though the distance was farther, the Spanish had an easier time sailing to the Caribbean from Spain because of the direction of the Atlantic current system.⁷⁰ With the growth in English voyages across the Atlantic and an increase in ships armed for engagement overseas, conflicts between European countries transported themselves across the Atlantic. Here they also encountered privateers and pirates. European merchants and sailors were soon affected by wars over trade and territory in North America. Native Americans were also involved in these wars as their lives and homelands were continually threatened.

The interactions between Native Americans and Europeans in North America varied greatly between different European and native population groups in various regions. In some

⁶⁹ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 39, 46-47, 49; Appleby, "War, Politics, and Colonization, 1558-1625," 68-69.

⁷⁰ N.A.M. Rodger, "Guns and Sails in the First Phase of English Colonization, 1500-1650," in *The Origins of Empire*, 80, 86-89.

cases, the relationship between one European group and one Native American group was a peaceful trade relationship while other groups clashed violently over land and resources.⁷¹ In Newfoundland, the Beothuk prevented Cabot and his crew from exploring beyond the coast of the island, but some were later captured by the Portuguese and forced into slavery. The remaining Beothuk were killed by early English and French explorers and settlers, and today, the Beothuk are classified as an extinct people group.⁷² It is still possible, however, that the Beothuk may have descendants still living in the Newfoundland region, and hopefully with modern DNA testing, more descendants can be identified.

For most Native Americans living along the eastern coast of North America, their first interactions with English sailors were infrequent. Most English crews attempted to trade with whomever they encountered, especially for furs which were becoming popular in Europe. Unfortunately, one element that was brought to the Native Americans from Europe was disease. Lacking immunity to these new diseases, Native Americans who interacted with Europeans began to die rapidly while also spreading the diseases to other Native groups through trade routes or other forms of contact. The outcome was detrimental as thousands of Native Americans succumbed to influenza, measles, and smallpox.⁷³ As European ventures evolved from establishing trade networks to developing permanent settlements, encounters with Native Americans became more frequent and violent.

The sixteenth century began with small groups of English explorers looking for trade routes and ended with attempts at colonization. English ships began to heavily arm themselves for potential engagements with other European ships across the Atlantic. Privateering and piracy

⁷¹ Mancall, "Native Americans and Europeans in English America, 1500-1700," 348-49.

⁷² Kurlansky, *Cod*, 21.

⁷³ Mancall, "Native Americans and Europeans in English America, 1500-1700," 330-32.

flourished in areas far away from the reach of the monarchs. Cartography played a major role in sovereign claims to vast territories across the continent. The fishing industry in Newfoundland became firmly established as various European merchants fought to control the coastal regions and banks. The sixteenth century paved the way for the expansion of European colonization and exploitation of North America. As the seventeenth century dawned, colonies grew, trade flourished, and subsequently, war loomed in the distance.

During the seventeenth century, England became the dominate European country in North America. This was not due to some initial governmental design but resulted from privately funded endeavors that eventually were taken up for one reason or another by the Crown.⁷⁴ The seventeenth century saw the origins of what became the British global trade network system. Trade routes connected English colonies to each other and with London.⁷⁵ Ships became the links between the peripheral colonies and the mother country carrying commodities, information, and people (both freed and enslaved) between the different locations. While trade data from the seventeenth century is sparse, there is enough information to show the growth of trade between London and the Americas.⁷⁶ Interest in the Newfoundland fisheries continued to grow, and several decades after Sir Humphrey Gilbert's failed attempt at colonization, new plans were developed to bring colonists to the island. Like most seventeenth-century European colonies in North America, these first groups of settlers from Europe experienced hardship and defeat as well as the occasional raid by pirates.

Newfoundland served two important purposes to England. First, the fisheries were a huge contributor to the economy and a significant link in the developing trade network system of the

⁷⁴ Canny, "Preface," xi.

⁷⁵ Canny, "The Origins of Empire: An Introduction," 28-29.

⁷⁶ Nuala Zahedieh, "Overseas Expansion and Trade in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Origins of Empire*, 398-99.

British North Atlantic. Second, the island of Newfoundland was strategically located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This allowed the island to serve as an entrance, or a blockade, to the St. Lawrence River and the northern Arctic waterways.⁷⁷ Control of such an important island was the desire of several European countries, but most attempts at colonizing Newfoundland in the early seventeenth century failed.⁷⁸

In 1610, the Newfoundland Company was granted a charter by the Crown to establish a colony on the island. John Guy and William Colston of Bristol led a group of settlers to Cupid's Cove in Conception Bay. This was only a few years after the establishment of an English settlement at Jamestown in 1607 and a French settlement at Québec in 1608. The Newfoundland settlers were instructed to prepare supplies needed by the large fishing ships that arrived every spring as well as to grow crops and raise sheep. The climate of Newfoundland had other plans. By 1630, only a few settlers remained, and the Newfoundland Company was dissolved two years later. George Calvert, 1st Baron Baltimore, attempted to start a colony in Newfoundland, but the harsh winter climate drove him south where he established the colony of Maryland. Piracy also hindered the new colonies and fisheries. Pirates attacked fishing stations and looted villages. They then traded their loot with other fishermen in the coves of Newfoundland. The Newfoundland Company and the English government were unable to assemble any kind of force to protect the island. With piracy unchecked and no permanent colonial government, English settlements in Newfoundland did not have much opportunity for success.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Robert V. Wells, "The Northern Colonies," in *Population of the British Colonies in America Before 1776: A Survey of Census Data* (Princeton University Press), 45, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/j.ctt13x154h.7>.

⁷⁸ Appleby, "War, Politics, and Colonization, 1558-1625," 74-75.

⁷⁹ Newton, "Newfoundland, to 1783," 125-26; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 43, 49.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Newfoundland was “governed rather sporadically.”⁸⁰ The first ship captain to arrive at the beginning of each fishing season was made “Admiral.” Fishing crews choose their “rooms” based on arrival to the island which resulted in fierce competition between groups. Newfoundland remained in the control of merchants and fishermen, and settlers were not given much priority or protection.⁸¹ A different story was developing in the New England colonies. During the 1630s, the Massachusetts Bay Colony developed a fishing industry off the coast of New England, while fishermen from England remained in Newfoundland.⁸² This division between Newfoundland and other English colonies in North America had a significant impact in the centuries to come. The two fishing industries evolved separately under different forms of government and with different relationships to the Crown.

As the number of fishing ships in the Newfoundland fisheries grew, clashes between fishermen intensified. Rules had to be put in place that evoked punishment if fishermen destroyed each other’s property. Fishermen also clashed with settlers and were often opposed to new settlements on the island. They felt settlements interfered with the success of the fisheries. Proponents of settlement in Newfoundland argued that an increase in colonists to the island could prevent piracy as well as stop fishermen from destroying the wooded areas and misusing the island’s resources. Despite the opposition, settlements grew slowly in Newfoundland. Fishermen still outnumbered settlers three to one during the fishing season, and they remained in control of the industry.⁸³ The first half of the seventeenth century was filled with disorder due to

⁸⁰ Wells, “The Northern Colonies,” 45 (quote).

⁸¹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 6.

⁸² Newton, “Newfoundland, to 1783,” 128.

⁸³ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 56-57, 61-63, 70.

an absence of any formal government. The push for colonization and the backlash by the fishermen contributed to friction both in Newfoundland and in London.

Another violent aspect of the North American colonies was the enslavement of people from Africa that were brought to the colonies to work on plantations. The surviving census data of Newfoundland does not mention any slaves,⁸⁴ however, the Newfoundland fisheries contributed to the Atlantic slave trade by selling cod in the Caribbean. Low-grade cod was shipped to the plantations in South Carolina and the Caribbean for enslaved Africans working on plantations. This created a market for cheap, poor quality, cod. Cod was also traded for enslaved Africans in West Africa.⁸⁵ Cod's role in the Atlantic slave trade tied Newfoundland to the English colonies in North America, the Caribbean, and Africa. The market for Newfoundland cod grew with the expansion of English colonization. As one of the first commodities that connected England to North America, cod held a significant place in the emerging British North Atlantic trade network.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, Newfoundland remained a fishing outpost with relatively few permanent European settlers. In contrast, New England's population was growing rapidly. While the fishermen remained in charge of Newfoundland, the colonial population of New England began to exert more control over their own colonies. This created further division between the two regions. European countries began to occupy separate spaces around Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence region. As the English exercised more control over their location on the Avalon Peninsula, the French were pushed further north around the island. Despite the English advancement, the French continued to have a strong position in the Newfoundland fisheries. Louis de Béchamel, a financier to King Louis XIV, contributed

⁸⁴ Wells, "The Northern Colonies," 49.

⁸⁵ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 76; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 69; Kurlansky, *Cod*, 80-82.

large amounts of money to the French fisheries in Newfoundland. The growth of the English and French fisheries caused the weakening of others, such as Spain and Portugal.⁸⁶ As England and France became the two strongest countries to occupy the Newfoundland fisheries, conflict inevitably arose between them.

As the English continued to occupy the area between Cape Bonavista and Cape Race with St. John's located safely between them, the French moved to other areas along the coast of the island. In 1662, the French built a garrison at Placentia on the southern end of Newfoundland. The location was perfect for French ships traveling between Canada and France to stop and replenish.⁸⁷ French settlers moved to the area, and it had a resident governor by 1668. France began to dominate the Newfoundland fisheries during the last decades of the seventeenth century. As the number of English ships were decreasing, around three hundred French ships sailed to the region every year.⁸⁸ When war erupted in Europe in 1688, however, the fishing industry experienced radical change.

When the Nine Years' War began, fishermen were pressed into service. This further diminished the English fishing industry in Newfoundland. In 1696, the French captured English fishing grounds in Newfoundland, including St. John's. The English Navy recovered St. John's the following year and rebuilt it with stronger defenses. The House of Commons exercised more control over the Newfoundland fisheries after 1688, and following the Treaty of Ryswick that ended the war, it continued to support the seasonal fishermen to the region and limit permanent

⁸⁶ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 72-73, 262; Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 80, 83, 92.

⁸⁷ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 121.

⁸⁸ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 134-35.

settlement.⁸⁹ The created a unique situation in Newfoundland different from all the other British colonies in North America.

By the end of the seventeenth century, England had been present in the Newfoundland fisheries for two hundred years. The government continually collected data on Newfoundland as the fishermen brought back reports each year on the land, ships, and fish. There are nineteen surviving censuses of Newfoundland between 1675 and 1775 which is the greatest of any English colony in North America. The census data shows the seasonal shift in population between the summer and winter, but the permanent population had periods of increase. Wars often led to periods of decrease in population. The English remained in control of the southeastern end of Newfoundland with St. John's having the largest population. The French occupied the coastlines east and west of the English territory. The population was almost entirely European with no mention of Native Americans or enslaved Africans. The census data does mention white servants, or bondsmen, which often made up more than half the population. Of course, there are variables which might have skewed the information, so all population and ethnical data must be analyzed with caution.⁹⁰ Overall, the population of Newfoundland continued to be comprised mainly of seasonal fishermen while the number of permanent settlers varied over the centuries.

The cod that filled the waters of the Newfoundland fisheries had been attracting sailors for hundreds of years. The Vikings followed the fish from Iceland to "Vinland." Centuries later, Basque fishermen traded Atlantic cod in the Mediterranean region. There is some evidence to support claims that Bristol merchants arrived in Newfoundland before Columbus reached the

⁸⁹ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 107-108; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 97; Bruce P. Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793," in *The Eighteenth Century*, 154.

⁹⁰ Wells, "The Northern Colonies," 45-49, 60, population table on page 47.

Caribbean. When John Cabot sailed into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, his crews caught thousands of fish and established a permanent trade route between North America and England. Repeated voyages across the Atlantic taught captains how to navigate the difficult North Atlantic currents, and new navigational technology contributed to the increase in the number of ships that sailed annually. Early English explorers like Martin Frobisher followed the trade routes to Newfoundland to search beyond the island for a Northwest Passage to the riches of Asia. European explorers to the region after him illustrated that the dream of finding an easy route to Asia was encouraged by merchants and monarchs alike. English cartography frequently depicted sovereignty over territories as well as a fictitious wide, easily accessible, Northwest Passage above the continent. Early colonial attempts in Newfoundland failed, and the English government continued to support merchant agendas over settlers. English colonies in other regions of North America, however, began to flourish, and soon New England boasted a tremendous growth in its own fisheries off the coast of Maine and Massachusetts. Overall, the two hundred years following Cabot's voyage dramatically changed the Newfoundland fisheries forever. The birth of the British North Atlantic trade network system began with cod off the coast of Newfoundland, and the fishing industry transformed the English economy from that point forward.

The eighteenth century saw the greatest changes thus far for the Newfoundland fisheries. In 1707, with the Acts of Union, the kingdom of Great Britain was formed. Britain continued to send annual fishing fleets to the fisheries at the turn of the century. The British government viewed the fisheries as a nursery for seamen that was only visited by seasonal fishermen and not a serious consideration for colonization. Despite this belief, the population of Newfoundland continued to grow in the eighteenth century. By 1760, the population was around 8,000, and

thirty years later, it had doubled.⁹¹ Regardless, Newfoundland remained without an established colonial government, and it was not until 1729 that a royal governor was formally appointed. The governor traveled with the fishing fleet from Britain and traditionally served a one-year term.⁹² As the New England colonies grew, competition increased in the fishing banks. Soon ships from New England, Britain, and France all fished along the coasts of Newfoundland and in the Grand Banks located Southeast of the island. These three groups played significant roles in the wars of the eighteenth century. Prior to this century, an “uneasy partnership” had developed between England and France in the Newfoundland fisheries.⁹³ Tensions rose as on shore fishing grounds were raided, ports attacked, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence began to swell with ships. Deteriorating relationships on the European continent did not help. A storm was brewing. A storm that brought intercontinental warfare and the eventually loss of North American colonies for both Britain and France. As the cod continued their migratory patterns along the North Atlantic currents, they were oblivious to their significant impact on Europe, North America, and the rest of the world. Unbeknownst to them, they were to become one of the biggest political and economic factors of the wars during the eighteenth century.

⁹¹ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 59; Peter Marshall, “British North America, 1760-1815,” in *The Eighteenth Century*, 373-74, 386.

⁹² Wells, “The Northern Colonies,” 45.

⁹³ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 135; Wells, “The Northern Colonies,” 49 (quote).

Winning It All?

The last decades of the seventeenth century marked a watershed moment for the British North Atlantic as well as the developing British Empire. In 1688, William of Orange took the crown to become King William III after King James II was overthrown and fled to France. The Glorious Revolution which propelled William to the monarchy represented a great change in Britain. Not only was a Protestant again on the throne, but William's ties to the European continent dictated his political agenda. Upon his death in 1702, the crown passed to Queen Anne, the Protestant sister of William's wife Mary, herself the daughter of the disposed King James II. Thus, the eighteenth century opened with a dramatic shift. The threat of a Catholic monarch was diminished, and in 1707, the English and Scottish Parliaments were united into one British Parliament located in London. The changes that occurred in Great Britain in the first decade of the century set the tone for the next one hundred years. As Britain engaged in several major wars during the eighteenth century, its Protestant ideals and relationships with different European countries shaped its course of action. Britain's connection with its colonies in North America was also eminently affected.

The War of Spanish Succession and the Seven Years' War were two significant wars that took place during the eighteenth century. The peace treaties that followed each war had tremendous impact on the Newfoundland fisheries and the entire British North Atlantic trade network system. As is often the case during peace negotiations between European imperial powers, territories exchanged hands and higher priority was placed on regions that boasted well developed trade routes. The fishing industry in Newfoundland was crucial to both Britain and France, and thus, was thrust to center stage during peace talks. While the victor usually reaped the biggest gains in peace negotiations, Britain did not walk away with a complete victory from

either war. The Newfoundland fisheries continued to be a source of friction and controversial claims. One unforeseen outcome of the wars was the deteriorating relationship between Britain and its North American colonies. The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed its forlorn conclusion.

The War of Spanish Succession began as the result of the ill-timed death of King Charles II of Spain. In 1700, Charles died with no heir and two candidates with claims to the throne. The first claim was from Philip, Duke of Anjou, and the grandson of King Louis XIV of France. Shortly after Charles' death, Philip was recognized as the next King by Spain. The second claim to the Spanish throne was from Charles, the son of the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I. In retaliation against the Bourbon claim to the Spanish throne, England, Austria, and the Dutch formed the Alliance of the Hague and declared war on France and Spain in 1702. The English and Dutch had been in an alliance since the Glorious Revolution when William of Orange became King of England. From the beginning of the war, the English navy dominated the seas. The English and Dutch created a blockade against French ports that the French navy was too weak to contest. While Newfoundland did witness military engagements, the fighting there produced no clear winner. Britain had more success in Nova Scotia where a combined force of British and New Englanders captured Port Royal thereby establishing British authority over the region. Things changed in 1711 when Joseph I died and left his brother Charles as the new Holy Roman Emperor. The peace negotiations that followed focused on overseas colonies and the Newfoundland fisheries. France wanted to hang on to its important fishing trade in the North Atlantic. The British wanted to eliminate the French permanently from Newfoundland. As both sides discussed terms, the Newfoundland fisheries were a center point of contention. The peace negotiations during the War of Spanish Succession set a precedent for subsequent peace treaties

following eighteenth-century wars. The control and use of the Newfoundland fisheries remained a major priority in North America for Britain and France in which neither side was willing to back down.⁹⁴

Robert Harley, who became the Earl of Oxford in 1711, was Lord Treasurer during the final years of the war. In August 1710, Harley and the other ministers began peace negotiations with France. By April 1711, the French submitted preliminary articles of peace to Britain. Oxford, pushing aside the requests of the Dutch, submitted a proposal with two sections: one for Britain and one for the rest of the Allies. One element of Oxford's proposal demanded France surrender Newfoundland to Britain. France wanted to continue to fish off the coast and dry its catch on the shores of Newfoundland after the British took control of the island. In September, two preliminary articles were signed. One article, which outlined the agreements between Britain and France and Spain, Britain withheld from its Allies.⁹⁵ The French and Dutch also engaged in secret peace negotiations between 1709 and 1710, but nothing became of those since the Dutch could not trust the French King to uphold his end of the bargain.⁹⁶ Britain lost some leverage when, in June 1712, Philip agreed to relinquish his claims to the French throne in order to remain the King of Spain. A group of diplomats met at Utrecht to finalize peace terms. At the beginning of 1713, Britain attempted one last time to negotiate with France by offering Cape Breton Island in exchange for France abandoning its fishing rights in Newfoundland. It was to no avail. The Peace of Utrecht was signed in March 1713. Queen Anne, a proponent of peace, died the following year. Her successor King George I, who sided with the Whigs in Parliament, had

⁹⁴ Jonathan I. Israel, "The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650-1713," in *The Origins of Empire*, 441-42; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 99-100.

⁹⁵ B.W. Hill, "Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the Peace of Utrecht," *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 2 (June 1973): 242, 244-45, 247, 250, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2638311>. Hill provides an excellent article on Oxford's role during the peace negotiations of the Peace of Utrecht.

⁹⁶ Israel, "The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650-1713," 443.

wanted to continue the war. Upon ascension to the throne, George had Oxford and the others in charge of peace negotiations for the treaty impeached; however, Oxford was later acquitted. The Peace of Utrecht remained widely unpopular in Britain, and the fact that the treaty allowed France to keep fishing by Newfoundland incensed the Whig members of Parliament. Britain gained several territorial possessions in North America, but the fishing controversy continued throughout the century.⁹⁷

The Peace of Utrecht in 1713 ended the War of Spanish Succession. In North America, Great Britain gained Newfoundland, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Nova Scotia, and control of Hudson Bay from the French. France kept Cape Breton, but it had to abandon the garrison at Placentia in Newfoundland.⁹⁸ Article 13 of the Treaty of Utrecht outlined the conditions for fishing in Newfoundland. First, the article established Britain's dominance over the island by stating "the Island called Newfoundland, with the adjacent islands shall, from this time forward, belong of right wholly to Britain."⁹⁹ Britain was given rights over the entire island, and thereby forced France to abandon all territory on the island including Placentia. Second, the article emphasized that "it shall not be lawful for the subjects of France to fortify...or to erect any buildings [on Newfoundland] besides stages made of boards and huts necessary for fishing and drying of fish..."¹⁰⁰ French subjects were only allowed to build temporary fishing stations to dry their fish on the island's shores. This ensured that France did not build any permanent structures on Newfoundland. The last portion of the article addressed the areas in which the French were permitted to fish. French fishermen were only allowed "to catch fish and to dry them on land in

⁹⁷ Hill, "Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the Peace of Utrecht," 241, 257, 261-62.

⁹⁸ Israel, "The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650-1713," 442; Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 138; Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 138.

⁹⁹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 30 (quote).

¹⁰⁰ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 138 (quote).

that part only, and in no other besides that, of the said Island of Newfoundland, which stretches from the place called Cape Bonavista to the northern point of the said island, and from thence running down by the Western side, reaches as far as the point called Point Riche.”¹⁰¹ The British occupied the southern and western ends of the island. The exact location of Point Riche soon became a source of dispute. The French extended their fishing boundary southward all the way to Cape Ray, but the British insisted the French boundary line stopped more than two hundred miles to the north.¹⁰² The French were upset over their new position in Newfoundland, and the British were angry the French retained any fishing rights whatsoever. This growing friction boiled over into the next major war only four decades later. The peace negotiations that followed that war also focused heavily on the Newfoundland fisheries.

From the War of Spanish Succession came the British conception of the proper “balance of power” in Europe which asserted that no one country (such as a combined French-Spanish Bourbon throne) would be permitted to dominate Europe. Britain assumed the self-appointed role as the protector and promoter of this “balance of power,” and this mindset influenced Britain’s actions in future wars.¹⁰³ Britain had reasons to support its claim to maintaining the balance of control in Europe. After the War of Spanish Succession ended, Britain had almost complete imperial control of the North Atlantic, albeit the French were still there. Britain’s new territories in North America were only a part of its acquisitions around the world.¹⁰⁴ The war catapulted the emerging Empire into Europe’s strongest colonial power.¹⁰⁵ The British Navy dominated the North Atlantic region and the European seas. The rest of the eighteenth century

¹⁰¹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 30 (quote).

¹⁰² Newton, “Newfoundland, To 1783,” 143.

¹⁰³ Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World*, 96; Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*, 12 (quote), 13.

¹⁰⁴ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 101; Lenman, “Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793,” 156.

¹⁰⁵ Israel, “The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650-1713,” 444.

showcased the navy's growing strength and global reach. Even though Britain had gained control over the Newfoundland fisheries, there was not peace in the banks. The next few decades following the war amplified the issues that were left unsettled. For as long as the French remained in Newfoundland, the British wanted them out, or at the least, relocated to the margins.

Critics condemned various elements of the peace treaty, but the fact that the French were permitted to remain in the Newfoundland fisheries after the war caused a great deal of concern. A paper printed in 1715, entitled "Instructions by the Citizens of London, to their Representatives for the Ensuing Parliament," questioned several actions taken during the previous peace negotiations. Article 10 of the pamphlet demands answers to "how the Expedition on Canada came to miscarry...came to allow the French to keep their Interest in Canada, to sell that in Newfoundland, and to settle on Cape Breton, to the great detriment of our Fishing Trade..." Even with the French removed from the island of Newfoundland, their ongoing occupancy on Cape Breton and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence was enough to alarm those invested in the fishing industry. The document also demanded Parliament "concur in giving the King such sums as shall be thought necessary for enabling His Majesty to defend the Nation...and to keep the Ballance of Europe." The Newfoundland fisheries were not only important to Britain's trade, but their protection, as well as the protection of all trade, was considered important to Britons in maintaining the balance of power in Europe.¹⁰⁶

In 1715, the Earl of Oxford also addressed critics of the Treaty of Utrecht during his impeachment. In his defense of Article 13, Oxford denied consenting to the French demands that

¹⁰⁶ "Instructions by the Citizens of London, to their Representatives for the Ensuing Parliament," *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, GALE (London 1715): 1 (quote), 2 (quote) https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=1425&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=8&docId=GALE%7CCW0104164276&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCFA&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CCW0104164276&searchId=R7&userGroupName=txshracd2597&inPS=true.

“France should have Liberty of Fishing, and Drying fish on Newfoundland.” The Earl went on to further explain how the French were permitted to fish based on the previous Treaty of Whitehall in 1686 and the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 which ended the Nine Years’ War. Oxford stated he was “inform’d, that at the Time the part of Newfoundland, where the Subjects of France are, by the Treaty of Utrecht allow’d the Liberty of Fishing, and Drying Fish, was not in possession of the English.” Oxford based his argument on the fact that through the treaty Britain gained control of the island of Newfoundland while France retained its “possession” of the fisheries. In his opening remarks, Oxford emphasized that “the principal View and Aim of the Allies was to settle and maintain an equal Ballance of Power in Europe.” The Earl connected the War of Spanish Succession and the subsequent peace treaty to the growing concern among Britons that it was their duty to “prevent the immoderate Growth of the Power of France.”¹⁰⁷

After 1713, according to the terms of the peace treaty, France vacated Nova Scotia and its garrison at Placentia. They moved the garrison to Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. The French continued to fish in Newfoundland, in Petit Nord or French Shore, and protected it from any British ships that crept too far north. After the French retreat, British fishermen expanded their fishing stations up and down the coast.¹⁰⁸ While the British Empire was growing after the war, the French Empire struggled. French colonial possessions around the globe remained isolated by varying degrees from each other, and the Empire was too weak to strengthen ties between them.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Earl of Oxford, “The Answer of Robert Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, to the Articles exhibited by the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses in Parliament assembled, in the Name of Themselves, and of all the Commons of Great Britain, in Maintenance of their Impeachment against Him for High Treason, and other High Crimes and Misdemeanors, supposed to have been by Him committed,” *Eighteenth Century Collection Online*, GALE (Dublin 1715): 1 (quote), 24-25, 26 (quote), 27 (quote), 28 https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=1425&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=9&docId=GALE%7CCW0104643403&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCFA&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CCW0104643403&searchId=R7&userGroupName=txshracd2597&inPS=true.

¹⁰⁸ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 148-49,168; Newton, “Newfoundland, To 1783,” 142-43.

The growth of the fishing industry in New England began to affect Newfoundland after the war. New Englanders began to compete with French and British fishermen in the trade industry. New England began to have a more significant part in the British Empire including assisting with the capture of Louisbourg in 1745. When the British returned the garrison to France in 1748 in the peace treaty following the War of Austrian Succession, the relationship between New England and the British Empire was strained. Although not as drastic as in New England, Newfoundland's position in the British Empire also saw slight changes during the years following the wars. The population of Newfoundland continued to grow, and after a failed effort to move them to Nova Scotia, the residents created a social contract in 1723. The British government finally stepped in and appointed a royal governor in 1729, and taxes were collected to build fortifications. The demographics of Newfoundland slowly changed from seasonal fishermen to a permanent society with its own form of colonial government.¹⁰⁹ Having a much lesser degree of self-government compared to Britain's other North American colonies, Newfoundland came to represent a society still heavily attached to the fishing industry but growing its own identity within the British Empire.

The Peace of Utrecht changed the imperial layout of North America as European countries gained and lost territories. As previously discussed, the use of cartography to illustrate dominion was widespread in Europe during the eighteenth century. Herman Moll, a German cartographer and mapseller, had moved to London sometime before 1678.¹¹⁰ In 1715, he created one of the most famous maps of North America. Moll's map, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America. Containing*

¹⁰⁹ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 144, 156-58, 167, 174.

¹¹⁰ Laurence Worms and Ashley Baynton-Williams, *British Map Engravers* (London: Rare Book Society, 2011), 456-57.

Newfoundland, New Scotland, New England, New York, New Jersey, Pensilvania, Maryland, Virginia and Carolina,¹¹¹ commonly referred to as the “Beaver Map,” highlights Britain’s new acquisitions from the Treaty of Utrecht [see figure 4]¹¹². Newfoundland is located in the top right corner of the map. Written below Nova Scotia (“New Scotland”) is a block of text that outlines the conditions of the Treaty of Utrecht regarding the fishing rights of the French in Newfoundland. According to article 13 as well as Moll’s map, “the French...are allowed to catch fish, and to dry them on land...from Cape Bonavista...as far as Point Riche.” Unfortunately, Moll placed Point Riche at the location of Cape Ray on the southwestern end of the island. This misplacement stirred an enormous amount of conflict between Britain and France. In a society where maps demonstrated authority and power, an error such as this had tremendous consequences. The boundaries of the French fishing grounds surfaced again in the peace negotiations for the Seven Years’ War.¹¹³

Moll’s map also includes five insets towards the bottom. The most striking inset is a scene depicting beavers hard at work building dams at the base of Niagara Falls, hence the map’s nickname. As a nod to the beaver industry, Moll used his map to highlight important trade activities in the North Atlantic region. The other four insets showcase other British territories in North America. One of the four insets depicts the entire continent including islands in the Caribbean and the northern part of South America divided into British, French, and Spanish

¹¹¹ Herman Moll, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America...* [Map], 1715 [i.e. 1731], Scale ca. 1:3,600,000, “A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America Containing Newfoundland, New Scotland, New England, New York, New Jersey, Pensilvania, Maryland, Virginia and Carolina,” Library of Congress, G3300 1731 .M6, accessed 29 January 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3300.ct000232/?r=-0.332,0.659,1.879,0.89,0>.

¹¹² See image in Appendix.

¹¹³ Dennis Reinhartz, *The Cartographer and the Literati: Herman Moll and his intellectual circle* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 135. Dennis Reinhartz has written one of the best accounts of Herman Moll and his works.

territories.¹¹⁴ Moll's map projects the image of an economically prosperous British Empire with a strong established trade network in North America. The inclusion of parts of article 13 from the Treaty of Utrecht emphasizes the importance of the fishing grounds in Newfoundland. Moll even included various fishing banks around the island on his map. He depicts commodities that played a major role in the British North Atlantic trade network system and the evolving British Empire. By including trade industries along with dominion, his map demonstrates political and economic strength. Cartographers, like Moll, created images that portrayed new gains in territories and trade and thus a growing Empire.

Herman Moll created another map of North America which depicts the codfish industry. Published around the same time as the Beaver Map, Moll's map, *To the Right Honourable John Lord Sommers...This Map of North America According to Ye Newest and most Exact Observations...*,¹¹⁵ depicts the North American continent with the Caribbean and the northern part of South America [see figure 5]¹¹⁶. Despite some errors on the map (California is drawn as an island) and the blank space in the top left corner simply labeled "Parts Unknown," Moll's map provides a huge amount of detail especially along the northeastern coast of North America. Newfoundland has many bays identified around the island as well as several banks included in the surrounding waters. One striking feature of the map is the term "Sea of the British Empire" which Moll inscribed along the eastern coast from the Grand Banks all the way down to "Carolina." Moll is clearly illustrating the territories and adjacent coastlines of the British

¹¹⁴ Reinhartz, *The Cartographer and the Literati*, 37, 136-37.

¹¹⁵ Herman Moll, *To the Right Honourable John Lord Sommers...This Map of North America According to Ye Newest and most Exact Observations...* [Map], 1715?, Scale ca 1:15,000,000, "This Map of North America According to Ye Newest and most Exact Observations is most humbly dedicated by your Lordship's most humble servant Herman Moll, geographer," Library of Congress, G3300 1715 .M6, accessed 2 February 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3300.ct007387/?r=-0.281,0.116,1.45,0.687,0>.

¹¹⁶ See image in Appendix.

Empire on his map, but the term “British Empire” was not predominantly used until after the Seven Years’ War. The fact that Moll includes this term on his map in the early eighteenth century is somewhat of an anomaly. Could Moll have been ahead of his time? More likely, Herman Moll was referring to the common conception at the time of several different “empires” of the British Empire that spanned the globe. His map shows the British Empire *in North America*, as opposed to the British Empire *in Africa*, or the British Empire *in the Caribbean*. The growing concept of a single global British Empire did not enter the vernacular until the latter half of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁷ Whether Britain’s North American territories were considered part of a peripheral empire or a single British Empire, Moll’s map is a projection of British power and authority in the region. One way to maintain power and authority over a region was to control its prosperous trade industries.

Herman Moll’s map is often referred to as the “Codfish Map” to distinguish it from his other map of North America, the “Beaver Map,” and because of the large inset on the left side depicting the codfish industry. Underneath the codfish inset are ten additional insets detailing important harbors. Above the codfish inset, Moll includes a brief key to his picture of “ye manner of Fishing for, Curing and Drying Cod at Newfoundland.” The codfish inset includes a fisherman in the foreground holding a line while other fishermen perform various jobs at the fishery in the background. Overall, the inset provides a great deal of information about the fisheries in Newfoundland from the clothing of the fishermen to their fishing equipment and structure of the fishing stations. Moll’s audience can easily see the steps taken by the fishermen to catch, dry, and salt the fish as well as remove the oil from the liver. The Codfish Map is

¹¹⁷ P.J. Marshall, “Introduction,” 7.

another example of a prosperous British territory in North America with evidence of a thriving codfish industry.

Both of Moll's maps were completed in the early eighteenth century after the conclusion of the War of Spanish Succession. After the war, Britain wanted to demonstrate its new power and authority in North America as well as illustrate two growing economic industries based on the beaver and codfish. Once again, cartography was used not only to emphasize dominion but also to depict economic prosperity. Control over trade was equally as important as control over territory; Therefore, Moll's maps include both newly acquired territory and highly valued commodities. After the Peace of Utrecht, Britain gained sole control over the island of Newfoundland, but France retained fishing rights along the northern and western coasts. This arrangement in the peace negotiations left unresolved issues and conflicting boundary lines. Not surprisingly under the circumstances, peace only held out for so long. The 1740s saw Europe at war again with Britain and France on opposing sides. The War of Austrian Succession also left behind feelings of resentment and lingering disputes. Again, peace did not last. By mid-century, Britain and France were at war again, but this time the conflict expanded to a global arena. Afterwards, the European boundaries of North America were scrambled and redrawn, and when it came time for peace negotiations, the Newfoundland fisheries again became a source of continued controversy and hostility.

The Seven Years' War which erupted across the world in the middle of the eighteenth century changed the British Empire forever. After the war, Britain accelerated into the position of global leader at a radically new speed.¹¹⁸ Increase in territory overseas contributed to political and economic growth which encouraged the need for a stronger British Navy to protect it. Of

¹¹⁸ P.J. Marshall, "Introduction," 1.

course, this new burst of speed saw one major setback before the century ended, but during and immediately following the Seven Years' War, Britain was not thinking such colonial upheavals were plausible. Britain's priority, like its European neighbors, was to defend the claims to its overseas territories. The ancient principle of *res nullius* was widely used in Britain and France to claim vast amounts of land overseas. In order to defend rights of dominion over territory against conflicting claims by other European countries, evidence of "discovery" and "occupation" had to be provided. The "occupation" of a territory gradually began to require proof of a "continual and successful existence." European countries started to produce stories, often widely embellished or entirely fictitious, to support their claims of ownership.¹¹⁹ Cartography was once again the tool often used to illustrate these assertions.

Thomas Jefferys was a British cartographer and map publisher who produced several maps during the Seven Years' War. Almost a decade before the start of the war, Jefferys had been appointed Geographer to the Prince of Wales.¹²⁰ In 1755, Jefferys published a map of Nova Scotia that was admired by the British government for its accuracy and consulted during a time of rising tensions between Britain and France in that region. Afterwards, Jefferys became Britain's leading influence on North American cartography.¹²¹ In 1760, Jefferys was appointed Geographer in Ordinary to King George III.¹²² His maps of North America were used by Britain as proof of "discovery" and "occupation" in contested areas during the war.

In 1755, Jefferys published his map, *North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville, Improved with the Back Settlements Virginia and Course of Ohio, Illustrated with*

¹¹⁹ Pagden, "The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c.1700," 48-49, 50 (quote).

¹²⁰ Worms, *British Map Engravers*, 347, 350.

¹²¹ J. B. Harley, "The Bankruptcy of Thomas Jefferys: An Episode in the Economic History of Eighteenth-Century Map-Making," *Imago Mundi* 20 (1966): 33, 35, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1150407>.

¹²² Worms, *British Map Engravers*, 350.

Geographical and Historical Remarks,¹²³ to dispute French claims to the region by providing evidence of British dominion through the principles of discovery and occupation [see figure 6].¹²⁴ Jefferys' map depicts the northeastern part of North America, including Newfoundland and the fishing banks, southward down to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. Jefferys wanted to present a counter argument to French cartographers (such as Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville) whose maps, Jefferys insisted, portrayed inaccurate boundary lines.¹²⁵ Jefferys' map provides several points of evidence in support of British authority. His map includes the names of treaties and charters establishing select boundary lines between British and French territory. Jefferys also includes two large insets that present a detailed explanation of Britain's rights to the contested areas and the French violations to those areas.

Jefferys' first inset, "English Title to their Settlements on the Continent," is prominently placed in the bottom right corner of his map. The inset outlines the history of English colonies in North America beginning with Cabot's expedition in 1497. Jefferys outlines the location of each colony as well as any treaties or charters pertaining to its establishment. According to Jefferys, all of North America belongs to Britain based on its "discovery" by Cabot. He even includes the Iroquois' lands under the British dominion based on the Treaty of Utrecht which declared the Iroquois as "subjects of Great Britain." Jefferys' map highlights the disputed area and creates an argument for its British ownership through the principles of "discovery" and "occupation." To

¹²³ Thomas Jefferys, *North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville, Improved with the Back Settlements Virginia and Course of Ohio, Illustrated with Geographical and Historical Remarks* [Map], 1755, Scale ca 1:6,250,000, "North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville: Improved with the Back Settlements Virginia and Course of Ohio: Illustrated with Geographical and Historical Remarks," Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, BRBL_00427, copy 1, accessed 3 February 2021, https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4200362?image_id=15636924.

¹²⁴ See image in Appendix.

¹²⁵ Harley, "The Bankruptcy of Thomas Jefferys," 38.

further his argument, and possible to arouse the British public, Jefferys includes a history of French attempts at seizing territory.

The second inset on the map Jefferys intentionally calls “French Incroachments.” This inset outlines the areas where France allegedly had intruded onto British territory. Jefferys focuses on Nova Scotia and the Ohio River Valley which were two areas under intense dispute prior to the Seven Years’ War. He emphasizes once more that the British were first to the region, first to “discovery,” and therefore, any French involvement in the area afterwards is considered an infringement. Jefferys makes a point to emphasize how such violations have impacted trade in those areas. He concludes his inset with how “the French are intruders into Canada...and have no Right but by Treaties...” This accusation supported the growing support for war in Britain. As a budding empire, Britain wanted to protect and defend its settlements and trade routes in North America, and Jefferys’ map provided the British public with visual evidence of increasing threats to those territories. Cartography was used to support dominion in both Britain and France. When proof of “discovery” and “occupation” were needed, Jefferys’ map demonstrates Britain’s justified possession and dominion.

Fighting in North America began in 1754 at the Forks of the Ohio River in North America. Over the last several years, France had begun building forts in the Ohio River Valley. Britain gave a section of this region to the Ohio Company which was comprised mainly of wealthy Virginia landowners. Therefore, in April of 1754, Colonel George Washington led a Virginia militia into Ohio Country where he defeated a small French force. The French quickly retaliated and forced Washington to surrender on July 3rd. Animosity in the contested areas of North America grew at the start of the war because both Britain and France accused one another of influencing Native American hostilities against the other. In 1755, General Edward Braddock

was sent to regain control of the Ohio River Valley, but he died at the hands of the French and their indigenous Native allies. While Britain initially tried to avoid it, war was formally declared in May 1756. The Seven Years' War became an imperial war fought in European colonies and in Europe itself.¹²⁶

At the beginning of the Seven Years' War, Britain suffered significant losses and struggled to gain new ground. In 1755, Admiral Boscawen failed to prevent French fleets from reinforcing their garrison at Louisbourg, and in 1756, the French captured the Mediterranean island of Minorca. The tide slowly began to turn for Britain by 1759. The previous year British forces captured the major French fort at Louisbourg opening the St. Lawrence River to the British Navy. Britain now dominated the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River. With the siege of Louisbourg, the French lost dominion over this important fishing region. Since the Treaty of Utrecht, the island of Newfoundland remained in British hands, and now the entire St. Lawrence region was controlled by Britain as well. France spent the rest of the century trying unsuccessfully to regain some authority over of its lost prized fishing grounds.

In September 1759, Major General James Wolfe became the fallen hero when Québec was seized. The following year France almost regained Québec, but British forces were able to reinforce their hold through their control of the St. Lawrence River. Britain then launched a three-sided attack on Montréal, and on September 8, 1760, the Governor-General of New France, Marquis de Vaudreuil, surrendered to General Jeffery Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America. Britain now had imperial sovereignty over Canada. Britain also gained territory in the Caribbean, India, and West Africa. After declaring war on Spain in 1762, Britain conquered Spanish Havana in the Caribbean. Tired and running low on funds, Britain and

¹²⁶ Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793," 159-60; Black, *British Seaborne Empire*, 114-16.

France, along with their allies, reached a peace agreement in 1763. The first global war was over, and the British and French Empires looked vastly different than they had before the war.¹²⁷

During the eighteenth century, public opinion shifted towards the ideals of a “blue water” policy that dictated Britain’s involvement in future conflicts. At the start of the Seven Years’ War, the focus moved towards strengthening the British Empire through its overseas possessions.¹²⁸ William Pitt, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, furthered this shift in popular opinion, and he focused military operations in overseas territories as well as in Europe. In North America, Pitt orchestrated a three-sided attack on Canada. In 1758, the French garrison at Louisbourg was captured as well as Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio River.¹²⁹ General Forbes, who led the campaign against Fort Duquesne, wrote to Pitt with the news from the newly named town of “Pittsburgh.”¹³⁰ Pitt sent frequent correspondences to the officers and governors in the British colonies of North America during the war. In 1759, Pitt’s instructions to General Amherst called for “pressing the Enemy in different Parts.”¹³¹ On August 5th, General Amherst wrote to Pitt with an account of the capture of Fort Niagara and his plans to build a fort at Crown Point.¹³² In 1760, after Wolfe’s capture of Québec, the British forces launched a combined attack on Montréal from Crown Point, Lake Ontario, and Québec. The French were overwhelmed and surrendered.¹³³ Pitt’s approach to attack from multiple sides effectively brought about the defeat of the French in Canada. His focus on French territories overseas

¹²⁷ Lenman, “Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793,” 160-63; Black, *British Seaborne Empire*, 116-18.

¹²⁸ Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*, 37, 53.

¹²⁹ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 117, 122.

¹³⁰ General Forbes to Pitt, November 27, 1758, in *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ed. Gertrude Selwyn Kimball, vol 1 (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1906), 406-409, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hx16id&view=1up&seq=13>.

¹³¹ Pitt to General Amherst, January 23, 1759, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, ed. Gertrude Selwyn Kimball, vol 2 (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1906), 12-14 (quote), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044014495329&view=1up&seq=13>.

¹³² General Amherst to Pitt, August 5, 1759, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, vol 2, 146-48.

¹³³ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 118.

allowed Britain to gain multiple victories across the world for a true “war of empire.”¹³⁴ Pitt’s imperial war also included military operations along major trade routes. After the siege of Louisbourg, General Wolfe’s letter to Pitt described the destruction of French fishing stations along the St. Lawrence River.¹³⁵ Pitt was aware of the importance of the fisheries to the North Atlantic trade network for both Britain and France. With control of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the British Navy simultaneously protected its fisheries and destroyed the French fisheries.

Pitt also made a point to address illegal trade with France during the war. On August 23, 1760, Pitt sent a letter to all the governors in North America and the Caribbean stressing the need to investigate illegal provisions being sent into French territories. Pitt wanted to prevent illegal trading that was providing goods to France. Pitt expressed his concern that “Commodities are taken, which interfere with the Produce of the British Colonies themselves...as well as to the most manifest Prejudice of the Manufactures and Trade of Great Britain.”¹³⁶ Pitt understood how controlling trade affected the outcome of the war. Pitt believed one way the British colonies served Great Britain was through trade, and therefore, its colonies’ trade needed to be protected from illegal activities and foreign interference.¹³⁷

When King George III ascended the throne in 1760, Britain was growing weary of fighting and mounting war debts. Pitt, by contrast, was prepared to carry on the war at all costs. His determination was tested when Spain claimed rights to the Newfoundland fisheries. Pitt demanded war on Spain, but the British ministry could take it no longer. Without sufficient political support or the King’s favor, Pitt resigned from office in October 1761. Regardless of

¹³⁴ Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*, 38 (quote).

¹³⁵ General Wolfe to Pitt, November 1, 1758, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, vol 1, 379-82.

¹³⁶ Pitt to Governors in North America and the West Indies, August 23, 1760, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, vol 2, 320 (quote), 321.

¹³⁷ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 122.

fatigue and debt, Britain declared war on Spain three months later, but the end was near. In 1762, Britain made additional territorial gains while peace negotiations continued.¹³⁸ The imperial war that Pitt choreographed brought Britain an increase in new territory connected by an ever-expanding global trade network. The French, after suffering enormous losses in North America, needed some way to advance their position in the negotiations, so they made one last strike at the heart of Britain's North Atlantic trading network.

If France had seen the correspondences between William Pitt and the governor of Newfoundland, it might have tried to attack St. John's sooner. On October 18, 1757, Governor Edwards wrote to Pitt to inform him that troops were being raised in St. John's as requested. Edwards also notified Pitt that he had made some improvements to the garrison but that "the Fortifications of the Island in general, are not in the best Condition."¹³⁹ Apparently, there were additional problems a little over a year later. In January 1759, Edwards wrote again to Pitt, this time from Gosport, to report that the soldiers at St. John's were growing restless and "many disorders have been Committed" including an increase in drinking.¹⁴⁰ In June 1762, the French, under the command of Comte d'Haussonville, easily captured the garrison at St. John's.¹⁴¹

The French similarly regarded the Newfoundland fisheries as a significant part of their Atlantic trade network. The French viewed the fisheries as a nursery for seamen, and in the years leading up to the Seven Years' War, French fishermen caught more fish each year than the British fishermen. During the beginning of peace negotiations, France demanded a right to the Newfoundland fisheries, and when it appeared to be slipping away, it launched an invasion. The

¹³⁸ Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793," 162; Stanley Ayling, *The Elder Pitt: Earl of Chatham* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1976), 284-89.

¹³⁹ Governor Edwards to Pitt, October 18, 1757, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, vol 1, 119-20 (quote).

¹⁴⁰ Governor Edwards to Pitt, January 2, 1759, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, vol 2, 1 (quote), 2.

¹⁴¹ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 143.

French had already lost nearly all their possessions in North America but were not willing to give up their fisheries in Newfoundland.¹⁴² By capturing the garrison at St. John's, the French destroyed the entire British fishing season for the year.¹⁴³ The French planned on using the garrison to launch further attacks on Placentia and eventually other British occupied territory along the St. Lawrence River. Ultimately, France's goal was to gain more control over the Newfoundland fisheries and use its new position to have a greater influence over the negotiations. For three months the garrison and residents of St. John's remained under French authority until Admiral Lord Colville brought forces from Halifax under Colonel William Amherst to regain the garrison. On September 15, British forces overpowered the French hold and d'Haussonville surrendered. The French had proven their point that the Newfoundland fisheries were a significant bargaining chip in the peace negotiations. When peace negotiations resumed, the French used their capture of St. John's to their advantage during the debate over the Newfoundland fisheries.¹⁴⁴ Once again, the Newfoundland fisheries found their place as a highly contested area at the center of negotiations.

After the preliminary treaty was signed in 1762, Joseph Massie published a pamphlet in London outlining how British oversight or neglect over the last one hundred and fifty years has allowed for the continual growth of France's naval power. Beginning with the Stuart Monarchy through the Treaty of Utrecht, Massie chronicled the poor negotiating decisions of England that continued to allow France to remain in the Newfoundland fisheries. Regarding the present preliminary Treaty of Paris, Massie demonstrated how permitting the French to access three

¹⁴² Mark Osborne Humphries, "'A Calamity From Which No Relief Can Be Expected:' Empire, Authority, and Civilian Responses to the French Occupation of Newfoundland, June – September 1762," *Acadiensis* 43, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2014): 42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24329575>.

¹⁴³ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 143.

¹⁴⁴ Humphries, "'A Calamity From Which No Relief Can Be Expected,'" 42-43, 46, 56-57.

sides of the island would give them a competitive edge in the European markets. By giving France the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, which are located to the southwest of Newfoundland, the French fishing ships would partake in the fishing season with Britain that begins six weeks before the fishing season on the north side of the island. He also provided evidence that illustrates how over the last hundred years, French ships have outnumbered English ships almost five to one in the fisheries. Massie voiced the fears of most British fishing merchants at the time who were angered by the preliminary peace terms that still permitted the French access to the Newfoundland fisheries, even after the despised Treaty of Utrecht fifty years earlier.¹⁴⁵

In February 1763, representatives from Britain and France signed the definitive Treaty of Paris ending the Seven Years' War. The French lost Cape Breton and were forced out of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. After the seizure of St. John's, however, the French were able to negotiate to retain their fishing rights in Newfoundland that they had under the Treaty of Utrecht. In addition, France was given the neighboring islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.¹⁴⁶ One major concern for Britain was how to maximize its victories without jeopardizing its other North American territories. Britain wanted to keep a stronghold over its North American colonies and decided to keep the French territory of Canada and return the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean. This decision gave Britain a stronger presence in North America, but at the loss of

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Massie, "An Historical Account of the Naval Power of France, from its first foundation to the present time. With a state of the English fisheries at Newfoundland for 150 years past. And various computations, observations, &c. proper to be considered at this decisive juncture," *Eighteenth Century Collection Online*, GALE (London 1762): 17 https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=3&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=3&docId=GALE%7CCB0126275788&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCFB&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CCB0126275788&searchId=R10&userGroupName=txshracd2597&inPS=true.

¹⁴⁶ Humphries, "A Calamity From Which No Relief Can Be Expected," 57; Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 179, 183.

economically prosperous Caribbean islands.¹⁴⁷ Since both Britain and France continued fishing off the coast of Newfoundland, conflict between the two countries only intensified in the following years. In 1765, Captain Griffith Williams published “An Account of the Island of Newfoundland.” In his work, Williams explained how the French received the best fishing grounds on the north side of Newfoundland because fog often covers the southern end of the island. His account includes the plans proposed the previous year by Captain T. Cole. Cole argued for the construction of forts between Cape Bonnavista and Point Riche to protect British fishermen. Cole concluded that eventually Britain could prevent the French from fishing off the coasts which could ultimately lead to a reduction in their number of sailors.¹⁴⁸ Cole’s plan highlights the core value of the Newfoundland fisheries as a nursery for seamen. By eradicating the French from the fisheries, Britain could also eliminate its ability to produce sufficient sailors.

Like the Treaty of Utrecht, the Treaty of Paris left unresolved issues regarding the Newfoundland fisheries that bubbled to the surface again at the peace negotiations following the next major war between Britain and France.¹⁴⁹ After three major wars and subsequent peace treaties, the disputes over the Newfoundland fisheries continued to be unresolved. Their problems were far from over as the next major war established a new country that also wanted its share of the fisheries. The transfer of Canada impacted the trade of both Britain and France.

After the Seven Years’ War, France increased its fishing off Iceland. With its enlarged territory

¹⁴⁷ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 87-88.

¹⁴⁸ Captain Griffith Williams, “An Account of the Island of Newfoundland, with the nature of its trade, and method of carrying on the fishery. With reasons for the great Decrease of the most Valuable Branch of Trade,” *Eighteenth Century Collection Online*, GALE (London 1765): 15, 17 https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=35&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=23&docId=GALE%7CCW0104577451&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCFA&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=2&contentSet=GALE%7CCW0104577451&searchId=R5&userGroupName=txshracd2597&inPS=true.

¹⁴⁹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 30.

in North America, Britain continued to invest in the fur and fishing trades.¹⁵⁰ One devastating consequence of the increase of fishing in Newfoundland was the disappearance of the Beothuks.¹⁵¹ The increasing presence of Europeans in Newfoundland eventually ruined the Beothuks' way of life.

Britain's victory in the Seven Years' War demonstrated a strong navy produced a strong empire. The two major wars of the first half of the eighteenth century strengthened an emerging British Empire. By the Seven Years' War, Britain boasted the most powerful navy and became Europe's leading power.¹⁵² The British Empire began to believe in a growing sense of superiority. These ideals prevented Britain from avoiding the disaster that lay ahead in the second half of the century.¹⁵³ With the increase in territory and huge war debts came the seeds of insurrection. Britain's North Atlantic world "began to unravel."¹⁵⁴ During the years following the Seven Years' War, Britain made several uncalculated errors. First, after the conclusion of the war, British troops remained in North America. This represented a stronger form of authority by the British government than ever before.¹⁵⁵ Trade also became a source of conflict. New Englanders were prevented by the Navigation Acts from trading outside the British Empire, but the Seven Years' War had increased the significance of goods from New England.¹⁵⁶ The growing fishing industry needed a larger market which they readily found in Europe and the Caribbean. Their role in the British North Atlantic trade network was outgrowing what Britain was able to import and export. The fishermen of New England, as well as merchants of other

¹⁵⁰ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 148; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 125.

¹⁵¹ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 196-97.

¹⁵² Humphries, "'A Calamity From Which No Relief Can Be Expected,'" 56; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 124.

¹⁵³ Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793," 167.

¹⁵⁴ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 194 (quote).

¹⁵⁵ Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793," 163-64.

¹⁵⁶ Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 145-46.

trades, soon realized their limitations within the British Empire.¹⁵⁷ With increasing taxes, trade restrictions, and their petitions left unresolved in Parliament, the British colonists of North America began to consider more aggressive ways to express their grievances. A revolution was brewing. This revolution brought changes not only to Britain, but to every aspect of the Empire, including to the fish that swam blissfully unaware along the coasts of Newfoundland.

¹⁵⁷ Kurlansky, *Cod*, 88-90.

Losing It All?

The years following the Seven Years' War saw a greater change to the British North Atlantic and the Newfoundland fisheries than before. Another major war, in which Britain and France again stood on opposing sides, brought about another set of peace treaties where rights to the Newfoundland fisheries were again negotiated and revised. Once more, boundaries were redrawn along the coasts of Newfoundland as well as across North America. This time, however, the British Empire took a major loss. Despite losing a great portion of its colonies in North America, Britain did not lose its cultural influence or economic ties over the region, albeit they were significantly altered. Instead, the end of the eighteenth century now marked the dawning of a new global British Empire that soon became the leading world power over the next century.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, Britain and France experienced radical transformations that saw ramifications for the next one hundred years. Of course, the beginning of the new United States of America contributed to the revolutionary changes seen at the end of the eighteenth century. As an integral part of the British Empire and the British North Atlantic trade network system, the Newfoundland fisheries were also affected by these dramatic changes. With a new country on the scene, new regulations and boundaries were created that outlined the rights of the respective parties. Disagreements, quarrels, and hostilities inevitably followed.

Directing the peace negotiations that ended the American Revolutionary War was William Petty, Earl of Shelburne. Shelburne had the monumental task of overseeing the end of the war that dealt a shocking blow to both Britain's imperial empire and its control over North America. While Shelburne was not the sole orchestrator of the negotiations, he deserves credit for his role which ultimately cost him his position and his political career. Like most members of Parliament during the end of the eighteenth century, Shelburne understood the importance of the Newfoundland

fisheries to the British Empire and wanted to maintain British control over the fisheries through the peace negotiations. Despite losing the war and thirteen colonies, Britain retained its position in Canada and the Newfoundland fisheries and thus, an original piece of its North Atlantic trade network. These remaining political and economic connections sustained it to rebuild an even bigger Empire in the nineteenth century.

During the Seven Years' War, General Wolfe was able to make his way up the St. Lawrence River and capture Québec partly thanks to the surveys previously completed by James Cook, then a master in the British Navy.¹⁵⁸ After the war, Cook was again called upon to survey the island of Newfoundland in order to create for Britain a detailed map of its coastlines and harbors. Cook's surveys, conducted between 1762 and 1767, produced maps that were used to ensure the boundary lines outlined in the Treaty of Paris 1763.¹⁵⁹ In 1775, Robert Sayer and John Bennett printed a map of Newfoundland from Cook's surveys titled *A General Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with the Rocks and Soundings...*¹⁶⁰ [see figure 7].¹⁶¹ The map was printed from plates that Sayer had purchased from the estate of Thomas Jefferys after his death in 1771.¹⁶² The map depicts the island of Newfoundland along with the southwestern edge of Labrador and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is apparent from the numerous rivers, harbors, and soundings that cover the map that Cook was considerably detailed in his work. Almost every cape and bay are labeled. Common areas of contention, including Cape Ray, Point Rich, and

¹⁵⁸ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 117.

¹⁵⁹ Newton, "Newfoundland, To 1783," 144.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Jefferys, *A General Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with the Rocks and Soundings*. Drawn from Surveys taken by Order of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissions of the Admiralty. By James Cook and Michael Lane, Surveyors, and Others [Map], 1775, "A General Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with the Rocks and Soundings. Drawn from Surveys taken by Order of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissions of the Admiralty. By James Cook and Michael Lane, Surveyors, and Others," Barry Lawrence Ruderman, Antique Maps Inc., accessed 23 February 2021, <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/66284/a-general-chart-of-the-island-of-newfoundland-with-the-rocks-jefferys>.

¹⁶¹ See image in Appendix.

¹⁶² Harley, "The Bankruptcy of Thomas Jefferys," 46, Worms, *British Map Engravers*, 347.

Cape Bonavista, are clearly indicated. The Avalon peninsula, the main British region for fishing which includes St. John's, is prominently in the bottom right corner of the map. As Cook was instructed to survey the coastline, Jefferys' map does not include any landmarks or cities in the interior of the island beyond the coast.

Cook's survey and Jefferys' map provided Britain with the most accurate map of Newfoundland to date. After the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763, Britain needed a map to illustrate the new boundaries and terms outlined in the treaty. Just like Moll's map of North America after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Jefferys' map establishes a visual representation of British dominion over the region. Unlike Moll's map, the conditions of the peace negotiations are not outlined in a large inset included on the map; however, the map could have easily been used by Britain to determine the exact location where fishermen of each nation were permitted to fish and dry their catch. Cook's extensive survey of Newfoundland highlights the importance of the fisheries to Britain. Maps were once again utilized to portray sovereignty over one of the most frequently disputed regions in North America. For Britain, the monumental task that took Cook years to complete was worth the investment. Every minor detail meticulously added to Jefferys' map contributes to the overall message that Britain emphasized during each peace treaty of the eighteenth century. The Newfoundland fisheries were one of its highest political and economic priorities, and therefore, they were worth protecting with its superior navy and depicting with its cartographers' pens.

Despite the terms outlined in the peace treaties and the maps created of Newfoundland, the fisheries remained a region of dispute following the Seven Years' War. In fact, there were so many areas of controversy following the war, that it seems almost likely that the next war should

have begun *before* 1775.¹⁶³ One major cause of conflict was the deteriorating relationship between Britain and its North American colonies. Although Britain acquired enormous territorial gains, the debts accumulated during the Seven Years' War had severe consequences. One attempt to reduce the debt was through taxes. Another decision after the war that produced crippling effects was the decision to leave British soldiers in the colonies and require the colonists to pay part of the army's expenses. Britain also issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that prevented the colonists from moving across the Appalachian Mountains. With new restrictions, taxes, and a stronger military presence, the colonists became increasingly restless over their new situation. Both sides did attempt to resolve the growing animosity, but a final compromise was never reached. The real situation had a much greater impact than either side might have realized in the early 1770s for as the colonists grew further away from Britain, they grew closer to one another. Their general resentment over their condition slowly started to unite the future states.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, after the Seven Years' War, conditions remained ripe for another conflict. The fire had not been completely extinguished and soon another war was raging from its ashes. When war erupted in Britain's North American colonies in 1775, the Seven Years' War was still in the recent past. This next war, this revolutionary war, permanently transformed the British Empire. Britain's colonies joined with its European enemies in what became a war involving clashing motives. Britain and France appeared on opposing sides, but in an entirely new way. Once again, the Newfoundland fisheries were an integral part of the peace negotiations following the war.

Britain's thirteen colonies and France entered the American Revolutionary War with different motives. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, France attempted to enhance its

¹⁶³ Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 29.

¹⁶⁴ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 7-9.

position in the Newfoundland fisheries while the British attempted to reduce France's position. After the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Britain gained control of the island of Newfoundland and forced the French to the northern coastlines, "le Petit Nord." One major point of contention in the Treaty of Utrecht was that it did not give France "exclusive" use of its fisheries. The Treaty of Paris in 1763, following the Seven Years' War, granted France the "liberty" of using the north coastlines to fish. Britain and France defined the term differently which caused enormous controversy. Fighting broke out between British and French fishermen who burned each other's fishing stations and boats as a popular form of vengeance. During peace negotiations after the Seven Years' War, France demanded its own place within the Gulf of St. Lawrence region and were given the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. Frustrated with its tiny possessions and the continual British threat to its fisheries, France contemplated declaring war.¹⁶⁵ The importance of the Newfoundland fisheries to France fueled its desire to continue to try to regain its position in the region instead of simply abandoning the area and retreating to the fisheries off Iceland. France wanted an area in the Gulf that was exclusive to French fishermen where they could prohibit other fishermen, especially British, from intruding. The consolation prize of St. Pierre and Miquelon were not adequate considering all the fishing territory France had lost over the past century in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. The French conquest of St. John's in 1762 probably supported its drive to continue the fight because if it was possible to capture St. John's, it was possible to capture much more. In January 1776, the French made another attempt at gaining "exclusive" use of their fisheries, but Britain denied its appeal. The French Foreign Minister, Comte de Vergennes, began to seriously consider secretly helping the British colonists

¹⁶⁵ Dallas D. Irvine, "The Newfoundland Fishery: A French Objective in the War of American Independence," *The Canadian Historical Review* 13, no. 3 (September 1932): 269 (quote), 270 ("exclusive"), 271 ("liberty"), 272, 274-75, Project MUSE, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/625583/summary>.

in North America. When news of the Declaration of Independence reached France, Vergennes prepared for war but decided to hold off after learning of the defeat of George Washington, now the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, a month later.¹⁶⁶

After America declared independence in 1776, Americans claimed rights to the Newfoundland fisheries based on the principle of “common law” that stated no one could control the seas. A new principle had, since the Renaissance, been adhered to that developed a distinction between “high seas” and “territorial waters,” the latter of which came under a nation’s dominion. Americans extended their “common rights” over the Newfoundland fisheries by claiming that as British subjects, they had previously been able to fish there, and now those rights continued even after they left the British Empire.¹⁶⁷ With both America and France claiming rights to the Newfoundland fisheries, it became clear that the Newfoundland fisheries were to be a major part of their alliance. When alliance talks began with America, France wanted to plan an invasion of the island of Newfoundland.¹⁶⁸ In February 1778, France and America signed a treaty of alliance and a treaty of amity and commerce. France made sure to include its “exclusive” fishing rights in the treaty of alliance. France and America also agreed that either party was allowed the conquest of Newfoundland. In the treaty of amity and commerce, Vergennes made sure that each group of fishermen would fish in their own separate fisheries.¹⁶⁹ France covered the two most important issues to them regarding the current state of the Newfoundland fisheries, and they wanted to make sure after the war they were given exclusive rights to their own private regions.

¹⁶⁶ Irvine, “The Newfoundland Fishery,” 278-79.

¹⁶⁷ Murphy, “The Comte de Vergennes, The Newfoundland Fisheries, and the Peace Negotiations of 1783,” 38 (“common rights”), 39 (quote).

¹⁶⁸ Irvine, “The Newfoundland Fishery,” 280-81.

¹⁶⁹ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 93-94; Murphy, “The Comte de Vergennes, The Newfoundland Fisheries, and the Peace Negotiations of 1783,” 34-35, 37.

On the other hand, the alliance between France and Spain contained different objectives than the alliance between France and America. Spain did not wish to acknowledge American independence but saw the war, like France, as an opportunity to regain lost possessions. Spain's interest lay in the recapture of Gibraltar and Minorca. Spain also hoped to reclaim Florida and some islands in the Caribbean. France and Spain signed their alliance on April 12, 1779. In the treaty, France again made sure to include its rights to the Newfoundland fisheries. France also agreed to allow Spain to fish in Newfoundland once Britain was defeated and driven from the island. In addition, France and Spain planned an invasion of England for later that year.¹⁷⁰ Each country entered the war hoping to gain something from a British defeat. France wanted control of the Newfoundland fisheries and to expel the British from the island. This in turn would hurt British trade and be a devastating blow to its North Atlantic trade network.¹⁷¹ Spain used the war to advance its position in North America and the Caribbean. With the entrance of Spain into the war, the goals of the conflict enlarged to a much wider scope beyond the colonists' original objective of independence.¹⁷² France and Spain were fighting for distinct motives while the Americans needed their help to secure Britain's recognition of their independence. The American Revolutionary War became a war for Britain's European enemies to win back lost territory and deliver a damaging blow to its prosperous economy. Many important trade regions were targeted, and all three countries hoped to acquire better positions in the Newfoundland fisheries because of the war.

France and Spain attempted an attack on Britain in the summer of 1779. They wanted the invasion to bring a swift end to the war. Their target was the naval base at Portsmouth. Similar to

¹⁷⁰ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 107-109; Richard B. Morris, *The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), 15.

¹⁷¹ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 59.

¹⁷² Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 16.

other attempted invasions of England, bad weather was the deciding factor. Northerlies caused a four-week delay of the Spanish fleet from joining up with the French fleet, and the French fleet was struck with smallpox. Eastern winds prevented the combined French and Spanish fleet from staying in the English Channel. By October, the invasion was aborted as winter began to set in. The failed invasion of England created tensions between France and Spain.¹⁷³ Regardless of the retreat of the combined fleets, Britain still increased its security along its coastlines. While this invasion failed, other attempts had more significant outcomes. The French and Spanish fleets again sailed toward the English Channel in 1781. Their presence prevented Britain from being able to send reinforcements to North America. The loss of additional aid was a major contributing factor in Lord Charles Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in October.¹⁷⁴ Lord Cornwallis' surrender accelerated peace negotiations, but the varying motives and objectives from America's allies created problems. Peace negotiations continued over the next two years. On the British side, the Earl of Shelburne found himself in charge of upholding Britain's demands and leading negotiations with the other belligerents. The task was not easy especially for the losing party. France, Spain, and now the new United States of America claimed rights to the Newfoundland fisheries. Surrounded by political enemies and aggressive requests from the other parties involved, Shelburne had to deal with Britain's historic loss all while keeping the remaining Empire intact. In Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's words, Shelburne believed "the sun of England would set with the loss of America, but it was his resolution to improve the twilight, and to prepare for the rising of England's sun again."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 27-42.

¹⁷⁴ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 111.

¹⁷⁵ Lord Fitzmaurice, *Life of William Earl of Shelburne, Afterward First Marquess of Lansdowne, with Extracts from His Papers and Correspondence*, 2nd and Revised Edition, Vol. 2 (London: MacMillian and Co., 1912), 164 (quote), HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31158002536802&view=1up&seq=15>.

Before becoming the Earl of Shelburne, William Petty joined the army following the start of the Seven Years' War. For his actions in the Battle of Minden and the Battle of Kloster Kampen, Petty was raised to the rank of Colonel and made *aide-de-camp* to King George III although many members of Parliament, especially the Newcastle Whigs, were disgruntled over Petty's new position in court.¹⁷⁶ William Petty's father died in 1761 bestowing upon Petty the earldom of Shelburne, and thus, Petty became the 2nd Earl of Shelburne joined the House of Lords. Shelburne had come to know Lord Bute after receiving the *aide-de-camp*, and during the peace negotiations from 1761-63, their close relationship allowed Shelburne a front row seat to correspondences between Lord Bute and the Duc de Choiseul, the French Foreign Minister at the time. These political lessons in diplomacy benefited Shelburne years later at the peace negotiations for the American Revolutionary War.¹⁷⁷ When fighting broke out in Britain's North American colonies in 1775, negotiations were soon underway between Britain and the new Continental Congress. Shelburne had witnessed firsthand the negotiations between Britain and France concluding the Seven Years' War. He, along with most citizens of Great Britain, was aware of the unsettled issues that had arisen after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. After both peace negotiations left unresolved issues that later resurfaced, when his time came, Shelburne was "determined...to leave nothing to be settled by subsequent negotiation in the peace of 1783."¹⁷⁸

At the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, Congress sent a petition to the King requesting to repeal the acts passed since 1763. While most members of Parliament believed reconciliation was still possible at this point, King George III saw the petition and

¹⁷⁶ Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *Life of William Earl of Shelburne, Afterward First Marquess of Lansdowne, with Extracts from His Papers and Correspondence*, 2nd and Revised Edition, Vol. 1 (London: MacMillan and Co., 1912), 70-73, 82, HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t37080b66&view=1up&seq=9;> Shelburne's autobiography is found in Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 1, ch. 1, 1-81.

¹⁷⁷ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 1, 83, 87; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 259.

¹⁷⁸ Quote taken from Shelburne's autobiography in Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 1, 80.

attacks outside Boston as “overt rebellion.” The King pushed for more oppressive legislation, and a bill was passed in 1775 that suppressed trade in New England including prohibiting them from the Newfoundland fisheries.¹⁷⁹ The bill proclaimed that due to the “Continuance of the Combinations and Disorders which at this Time prevail...it is highly unfit that the Inhabitants of [Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island] should enjoy the same Privileges of Trade...” The bill stated that the restrictions would be lifted when “Peace and Obedience to the Laws shall be so far restored...”¹⁸⁰ The King made it clear that such actions that he felt were against the Crown were duly reprimanded. Congress again sent a petition to the King which was again rejected. On July 4, 1776, Congress approved the Declaration of Independence and the United States of America was born. While most in Britain at the time remained unalarmed, Shelburne tried to convince them of the real dangers ahead. He proclaimed, “I foresee the possibility...if not the strong probability, of our being compelled to engage in a foreign war.” His cries went unheard.¹⁸¹

American diplomats began seeking aid from other countries, and soon America and France joined in alliance against their shared enemy. Once Britain learned of the treaty, it began to prepare for war with France. At first, Shelburne saw American independence as a detrimental blow to Britain. Instead, in March 1778, he proposed the two countries share a federal union with “one purse and one sword,” but by then, it was too late to reverse course. After Spain entered the

¹⁷⁹ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 1, 475, 476 (quote).

¹⁸⁰ Great Britain Parliament, “A bill to restrain the trade and commerce of the province of Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire, and the colonies of Connecticut and Rhode Island, and Province Plantation in North America,...and to prohibit such provinces and colonies from carrying on any fishery on the banks of Newfoundland...,” *Eighteenth Century Online Collection*, GALE (London 1775): 2 (quote), 7 (quote) https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=137&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=90&docId=GALE%7CCW0124271884&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCEW&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=5&contentSet=GALE%7CCW0124271884&searchId=R6&userGroupName=txshracd2597&inPS=true.

¹⁸¹ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 1, 477-79, 483 (quote).

war alongside France, Shelburne realized negotiations were now necessary, but he remained hopeful that there could be some form of reconciliation between Britain and its former colonies. As France and Spain prepared to invade England in 1779, hope was running out.¹⁸² Over the next couple of years, Shelburne came to realize that if America's separation was inevitable, he preferred that over a "force of arms or conquest" for its return. Shelburne's attitude towards peace guided his role during the subsequent peace negotiations.¹⁸³

After Lord Cornwallis surrendered, Lord North resigned, and the position went to Charles Watson-Wentworth, the Marquess of Rockingham. Unfortunately, the Marquess of Rockingham had poor lungs which prevented him from leading efficiently. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was given to Charles Fox, and the Secretary of State for Home, Irish, and Colonial Affairs was given to Shelburne.¹⁸⁴ Shelburne and Fox were longtime political rivals. As the Secretary over Colonial Affairs, any negotiations with Britain's colonies fell under the purview of Shelburne. The problem arose when it was unclear if the new United States fell under "colonial affairs" or "foreign affairs," depending on if it were viewed as an independence nation or rebellious colonies. Since Britain had not yet formally recognized America's independence, Shelburne felt that the peace negotiations fell under within his department. On the other hand, Fox claimed the sheer act of beginning negotiations recognized independence, and therefore, the peace talks were under his dominion as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. One advantage Shelburne did have over Fox was his association with Benjamin Franklin. This previously

¹⁸² Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 12-13, 14 (quote), 33.

¹⁸³ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 81 (quote).

¹⁸⁴ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 82-83, 87-91; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 251-53, 257-58; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 127, 137-38.

established relationship played a major role in starting peace negotiations in Paris between Britain and its former colonies.¹⁸⁵

As peace negotiations began in 1782, American independence was not what caused the greatest disputes over the next several months. Britain, France, Spain, and the new United States were all trying to reach compromises and gain advantages over one another. Even Britain's two secretaries held different views regarding negotiations. Fox wanted American independence recognized first in the hopes that afterwards, peace would conclude quickly and seamlessly for Britain. Shelburne wanted to wager independence in exchange for "favourable terms" for Britain, and he believed separate peace negotiations with each country might produce better outcomes over conflicting demands. One of those conflicting demands that each country laid claim to was the Newfoundland fisheries. The same fisheries that plagued the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and haunted the Treaty of Paris in 1763 returned for another round of hostilities. Their fate was just too valuable to relinquish.¹⁸⁶

Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Jay, and Henry Laurens to be the delegates for America at the peace negotiations, but Laurens' ship was captured off the coast of Newfoundland by the British Navy, and he ended up in the Tower of London. Originally Congress wanted rights to the Newfoundland fisheries along with acknowledgement of independence and access to the Mississippi River as preconditions to the peace negotiations. After some persuading from France, the American tone softened, and acknowledgement of independence was placed above everything else to begin negotiations. Adams, a New Englander,

¹⁸⁵ C.R. Ritcheson, "The Earl of Shelburne and Peace with America, 1782-1783: Vision and Reality," *The International History Review* 5, no.3 (Aug 1983): 330-31, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40105313>.

¹⁸⁶ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 114 (quote); Murphy, "The Comte de Vergennes, The Newfoundland Fisheries, and the Peace Negotiations of 1783," 32.

however, continued to press for access to the Newfoundland fisheries. Adams feared Vergennes wanted America to give up its rights to the fisheries, and he was not far from the truth.¹⁸⁷

France did not join the American Revolutionary War with the sole purpose of fighting for America's independence from Britain. France joined the war to take advantage of an opportunity to weaken Britain and regain some territory lost after the Seven Years' War. As it had previously insisted upon, France wanted "exclusive" rights to its section of the fisheries, and thus, Vergennes was not going to assist the Americans with their claims to the Newfoundland fisheries. The French foreign minister did not support the American principle of "common rights" and believed that America had surrendered its rights to the fisheries when it declared independence. He, therefore, was not going to continue the war until Britain recognized America's rights to the fisheries. Vergennes supported the common belief in Europe that the coastal fisheries belonged to whomever owned the coast. As the peace negotiations began, France focused on the boundary lines between French and British fishing regions. Spain also had not joined the war to fight for American independence and wanted to make sure that America did not gain access to the Mississippi River. France even wanted Canada to remain in British hands to prevent America from growing too powerful and no longer needing its European allies.¹⁸⁸ Each wanted a greater position in the Newfoundland fisheries. Therefore, Britain, France, Spain, and the United States entered the peace negotiations with clashing agendas, and none of them were willing to continue fighting the war solely for the agendas of their allies. The treaties of alliance between the United States and France, and France and Spain, complicated the peace discussions. From the start, America required recognition of independence before the delegates

¹⁸⁷ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 115-17; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 21-22, 25, 194; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 116-17.

¹⁸⁸ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 114-15; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 219-20; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 142; Murphy, "The Comte de Vergennes, The Newfoundland Fisheries, and the Peace Negotiations of 1783," 41-46.

would begin formal negotiations. France and Spain were often concerned, or outright against, additional demands made by the United States. These were the opening attitudes for the peace talks of the American Revolutionary War. Against this backdrop, Britain attempted to remain in control of the Newfoundland fisheries while concluding an expensive war and emerging with minimal damage to the Empire beyond what had already been lost. Under a new administration inadequately led by a dying Rockingham, negotiations between Britain and the United States began with correspondence between old acquaintances.

On March 22, 1782, Benjamin Franklin wrote a letter to the Earl of Shelburne. Franklin's letter ensured his desire to seek peace, and the British Cabinet decided to open communications with Franklin. Shelburne selected his friend Richard Oswald to go to Paris with a response letter to Franklin. Shelburne's letter introduced Oswald and affirmed Britain's hope for peace. After Oswald's arrival, Franklin took him to speak with Vergennes. Meanwhile, Charles Fox sent his own delegate, Thomas Grenville, to Paris to begin peace talks. Thus, the political rivalry between Shelburne and Fox was carried overseas through their separate appointments.¹⁸⁹

The Cabinet decided on May 21st to appoint Grenville the authority to negotiate peace conditions. Shelburne instructed Oswald to report all information he received to Grenville. However, both Franklin and King George III expressed their wish for Oswald to remain in Paris and assist with discussions. Franklin led both Oswald and Grenville to believe that America might end its alliance with France after Britain recognized its independence. After reluctantly realizing that independence was the only option to end the war, Shelburne sought a relationship

¹⁸⁹ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 118-20; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 250; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 139; Ritcheson, "The Earl of Shelburne and Peace with America," 330-32.

based on free trade.¹⁹⁰ Shelburne also instructed Oswald to “restore the Loyalists to a full enjoyment of their rights and privileges.” Britain’s concern for the Loyalists in America was apparent throughout the negotiations.¹⁹¹

On May 31st, Franklin informed Oswald two peace delegations should be created to address the appeals of America and France separately, and Franklin specifically requested Oswald to be the correspondent with America. Britain concluded that Shelburne had authority over the discussions with America while Fox would direct negotiations with the other belligerents. Shelburne and Fox were given separate negotiations to direct, but Fox wanted to declare America’s independence before signing a treaty, so he could take over peace talks in his department of foreign affairs. His proposal was voted down. His time was also running out. On July 1st, Lord Rockingham died from the influenza pandemic that was sweeping across Europe. Charles Fox promptly resigned. King George III summoned Shelburne to lead the new administration. Shelburne was now in charge of the Cabinet and all of the peace negotiations. On July 25th, Shelburne gave Oswald “full powers” to negotiate peace terms. Alleyne Fitzherbert was selected to replace Grenville.¹⁹² When Shelburne took over the administration, Britain was exiting a devastating war. His role in the peace negotiations over the next several months defined how Britain recovered and redirected its national interests. His administration lasted for less than a year, but in that time, Shelburne arranged peace treaties with two of Britain’s longest rivals and its former colonies that were now an independent nation. He also took the fall for their

¹⁹⁰According to C.R. Ritcheson, Shelburne’s ideas regarding free trade between the two countries were unable to come to full fruition due to lack of opportunity and ingenuity. See Ritcheson, “The Earl of Shelburne and Peace with America,” 344-45.

¹⁹¹ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 127-128 (quote), 131; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 257; Ritcheson, “The Earl of Shelburne and Peace with America,” 332-33.

¹⁹² Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 146, 148-49, 155, 167; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 280-81; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 143; Ritcheson, “The Earl of Shelburne and Peace with America,” 335, 337-38, 340 (quote).

shortcomings. The debate over the Newfoundland fisheries continued throughout the negotiations. Shelburne dealt with the same disputes over fishing rights and regions that his predecessors before him had encountered during previous peace talks. As the American Revolutionary War drew to a close, the Newfoundland fisheries were once again propelled to center stage.

The Newfoundland fisheries were one of the first topics discussed between Britain and the United States. Along with independence, the American diplomats raised the issues of rights to the fisheries and their boundary lines in North America. In July, Franklin gave Oswald four “necessary” and four “advisable” articles for negotiation. Franklin’s “necessary” articles addressed independence, the boundaries of the United States, the boundaries for Canada, and the fourth article which granted “a freedom of fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland...” Jay wanted the boundary of the United States to extend westward to the Mississippi River, and he wanted to maintain navigational rights for the United States on the river as they had been under Britain. Franklin expressed his concern to Oswald that the British request for the restoration of property taken from the Loyalists could not be fulfilled because Congress was not able to recover land confiscated by the various states. Oswald reported this information, along with Franklin’s articles, back to Shelburne and the British Cabinet. His received an answer from Shelburne by the end of the month.¹⁹³

On July 27th, Shelburne wrote back to Oswald regarding the articles he had received from Franklin. At long last, Shelburne consented to independence. In his letter, he instructed Oswald to acknowledge Franklin’s “necessary” articles but not the “advisable” articles. Shelburne conveyed his desire that by accepting independence, peace would come quickly, and a new

¹⁹³ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 166 (quote) 167-69; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 289; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 146-47.

relationship between the United States and Britain could emerge. Shelburne favored peace and a quick end to the costly war, but the rest of the British Cabinet were not as equally in agreement with Shelburne regarding the acknowledgment of America's independence. It was not until the end of August that the Cabinet agreed to Franklin's four "necessary" articles. Britain took Franklin's articles as they were "literally construed," and therefore, American independence was to be considered an article of the peace treaty and not a separate acknowledgement. Britain wanted to avoid at all cost an act of Parliament granting independence. Also, based on Franklin's fourth article, Britain was prepared to permit the United States to fish off the coast of Newfoundland but not dry the fish on shore.¹⁹⁴ Franklin's articles became the foundation for the preliminary peace treaty between Britain and the United States. The debates over territory boundaries and fishing rights continued over the next three months. Britain wanted the Loyalists in North America protected, and the United States did not want to wait until the formal peace treaty was signed before independence was recognized. Also, France and Spain continued to dispute their claims to the Newfoundland fisheries and boundary lines in North America. Britain's longtime rivals did not want Britain's negotiations with the United States to create additional challenges to their demands.

Considering each country held claims to the Newfoundland fisheries, it is not surprising that the demands of France, Spain, and the United States during the peace negotiations conflicted with one another. It did not take the American delegates long to realize that their ally in war, France, was not going to be their ally during peace talks. At the urging of Spain, France secretly wanted to continue the war until Gibraltar was captured. Once Gibraltar was taken, France planned to bargain for Spain's claims to the Mississippi River and its own claims to the

¹⁹⁴ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 167-69; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 295, 317 (quote), 318.

Newfoundland fisheries. Vergennes sent Joseph-Matthias Gérard de Rayneval to London to speak with Shelburne. This action further aroused the suspicion of the American commissioners that Britain and France, and probably Spain, were collaborating without them. Over the course of several meetings, Shelburne informed Rayneval that Britain intended to recognize France's claim to the Newfoundland fisheries, but Britain was not going to relinquish any control over the island. France was still not to be permitted to build any permanent structures on Newfoundland. Britain had just agreed to accept the United States' claims to the fisheries. Rayneval told Shelburne that France was opposed to the United States' claims to the Newfoundland fisheries and the western boundary line extending all the way to the Mississippi River. France still intended to fight for "exclusive" rights to its region of the fisheries. France also did not want the United States to gain access to the Great Lakes region and preferred it to remain as British territory with the rest of Canada. As their meetings concluded, it became evident to Shelburne and the rest of the British government of the rift forming between France and the United States.¹⁹⁵

On October 5, 1782, John Jay handed Richard Oswald a draft for the proposed peace treaty between Britain and the United States. In the draft, along with recognition of independence, the United States outlined its most important demands regarding boundary lines and the Newfoundland fisheries. The draft gave the citizens of the United States permission to dry their fish on shore in Newfoundland. Jay's draft extended the western boundary line of the United States to the Mississippi River and granted it shared access to its navigation alongside Britain. The following day, October 6th, Fitzherbert received the demands from Vergennes concerning France and Spain. The French again insisted upon "exclusive" rights to the

¹⁹⁵ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 308-09, 318-19, 325-26, 329; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 173-74, 177, 180.

Newfoundland fisheries between Cape St. John and Cape la Hune (Point á la Lune). France also wanted at least one island where it could build a permanent settlement. Spain demanded Gibraltar along with other concessions. The British might have been willing to relinquish Gibraltar in return for a favorable trade had the news of France and Spain's failed attempt at capturing it not just arrived.¹⁹⁶

The British success at holding off the capture of Gibraltar increased its power at the negotiation table. Almost a month earlier, a combined French and Spanish fleet under the command of Duc de Crillon had attacked the British settlement with cannon fire for days. Britain remained in control of the fortress, and by October, relief arrived which secured its hold. Britain used its victory to its advantage with negotiations between the United States, France, and Spain. Britain knew the United States did not need to continue the war in order for Spain to obtain Gibraltar, so it used the growing conflict between the two allies to argue for concessions for British Loyalists. Shelburne sent Henry Strachey to the negotiations to discuss reducing the boundary lines claimed by the United States in order to provide land for the Loyalists, or compensation from the sale of the land. After its failure at capturing Gibraltar, France dropped its demands of an "exclusive" right to the Newfoundland fisheries but still requested that Britain "secure an uninterrupted enjoyment of their occupation to the French fishermen."¹⁹⁷ Despite losing the war, Britain slowly gained more control over the peace negotiations by playing one ally against another. Its late victory in Gibraltar only increased its negotiating power. The disputes between the United States, France, and Spain over boundary lines in North America and the Newfoundland fisheries allowed Britain to make demands for its Loyalists as well as maintain a firm control over the island of Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence region.

¹⁹⁶ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 184, 187-89; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 346.

¹⁹⁷ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 191-93, 197 (quote); Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 341-42.

When Jay's draft reached the British Cabinet, it was met with disdain. The main concerns regarding the fisheries, the boundary lines, and the Loyalists were again addressed. Strachey was sent to Paris with the amendments for Oswald to share with the American diplomats. Shelburne wanted to secure the "Old Northwest" as British territory in order for the land to be given to Loyalists, and the British ministry denied the Americans the right to dry their fish on the shores of Newfoundland. Strachey arrived in Paris right after the arrival of John Adams from the Netherlands. On October 29th, final peace talks began between the British and American commissioners. After several days of negotiations, a revised draft was agreed upon by November 4th. In the new draft, the Americans relinquished their demands to dry fish on the shores of Newfoundland in exchange for the rights to fish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the ability to dry their fish on the "unsettled" parts of Nova Scotia. Strachey returned to London with the new version for Shelburne and his fellow cabinet members to review. Meanwhile, distrust was growing deeper between the American diplomats and the French government. Vergennes had made it clear that France did not support the American's claims to the Newfoundland fisheries and that France was not going to prolong the war in order for the United States to obtain all its demands. On the other side of the English Channel, Strachey was instructed to amend the peace treaty draft to limit American fishermen to "the unsettled parts of the Magdalene Islands." With another round of revisions, Strachey returned to Paris and peace talks continued on November 25th.¹⁹⁸

During this final round of negotiations, John Adams presented his proposal for the Newfoundland fisheries. Adams argued that the New England fishermen arrived first to the fisheries each season because they were closer to the island than Britain or France. Therefore, the

¹⁹⁸ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 350-51, 355, 357, 365-67, 368 (quote), 372; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 202, 205.

Americans should be allowed access to fish on the shores of Newfoundland. Second, Adams explained how the New Englanders dried their fish on land like the British fishermen whereas the French fishermen did not. After discussions, Adams drafted a new fishing article for the peace treaty. He included the rights of the Americans to fish in the Grand Banks as well as Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He also included the use of Cape Sable and the “unsettled” parts of Nova Scotia for drying their fish. His proposal allowed American fishermen the ability to rent land to build fishing stations for drying their fish. The British diplomats wanted to change the word “right” to “liberty” in Adam’s proposal, thereby changing the article to grant the “liberty” to fish on the “coast” of Newfoundland and the “right” to fish on the Grand Banks and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The proposal to dry fish on Cape Sable was dropped, but Americans were again given the “liberty” to dry their fish on “unsettled” areas. This slight change of words, possibly unbeknownst to the American diplomats at the time, had enormous long-term effects. The understanding of what was the American’s “right” verses what was their “liberty” would be contested for centuries.¹⁹⁹ This slight edit in word choice opened the door for the British to remain in control of the Newfoundland fisheries even while forced to share those fisheries with American, as well as French, fishermen. Even though Britain had lost the war, it was still able to achieve substantial victories in the peace negotiations.

Finally, on November 29th, after being exchanged for Lord Cornwallis, Henry Laurens reached Paris. Although ill, he was able to partake in the final day of negotiations. The preliminary treaty between the United States and Britain was signed on Saturday, November 30, 1782. Representing the losing party, as was the custom, Richard Oswald signed his name first. The four American diplomats then signed in alphabetical order, and the two copies were sealed.

¹⁹⁹ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 373-79.

The peace treaties were then sent to the governments of the two represented parties for approval.²⁰⁰ Shelburne and the British diplomats had acquired peace with their former colonies, but it came at a high cost.

On December 5th, King George III stood before Parliament and announced that his former colonies were now “free and independent states.” While liberty bells rang out across the eastern coast of North America, the members of Parliament immediately set out assigning blame for the “dismemberment of the Empire.” The Opposition easily attacked Shelburne and his Cabinet. Fox once again lashed out at his political rival. Throughout the turbulent Parliamentary sessions that followed the signing of the preliminary peace treaty with the United States, Shelburne continued peace talks with France and Spain.²⁰¹ Once again, Britain faced its two oldest rivals across the negotiation table, but this time, it was not in the winner’s seat. Having just lost most of its North American colonies, Britain attempted to maintain control of the possessions it had left and not improve its rivals’ positions in the negotiation. The “balance of power” was also always on the minds of European diplomats as they discussed concessions. Britain, still the strongest imperial power in Europe despite losing the American colonies, was determined to remain Europe’s protector of this delicate balance.

The French attempted to get “exclusive” rights to the Newfoundland fisheries right up until ink touched paper. Vergennes was furious over the rights that the Americans had received to the Newfoundland fisheries, and he continued to insist that France be given a stronger claim. He demanded “exclusive” rights to fishing in their regions of Newfoundland as well as drying their fish on shore. Vergennes also wanted France to be given complete control over the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The British agreed to his demands for inshore fishing off

²⁰⁰ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 376-77, 381-82; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 205-07.

²⁰¹ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 209 (quotes), 210, 213.

Newfoundland, but again denied the French “exclusive” rights to any part of the region. Spain also demanded rights to the Newfoundland fisheries by using the old European principle of “discovery” to claim its subjects had been there first. Vergennes rejected Spain’s claims to the Newfoundland fisheries and even expressed his discontent to the British. The peace negotiations were nearly severing the alliance of France and the United States and also jeopardizing French and Spanish relations.²⁰²

After their victory in Gibraltar, Shelburne was able to hold out against France’s increased demands. He updated his proposal to prohibit the French from the southern end of Newfoundland and rescinded their offer of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The small Belle Island was presented as an alternative. The French held onto their demands for St. Pierre and Miquelon, and Britain agreed to return them as well as give the French “assigned” areas of Newfoundland. Vergennes also wanted to include in the peace treaty protection for French fishermen from American competitors. On January 20, 1783, the diplomats of Britain, France, and Spain signed their respective preliminary peace treaties. After the preliminaries were signed, Shelburne began to consider establishing commercial treaties with the new United States, but this was not to come to fulfillment during his administration because as soon as the peace treaties reached Parliament, his job was in jeopardy.²⁰³ Shelburne had obtained peace with Britain’s European rivals, but there was no peace for him back in London.

On January 27th, Parliament reviewed the preliminary peace treaties, and disputes soon spread like wildfire. Almost every article was attacked, and the merchant fishermen with interests in the Newfoundland fisheries complained that the concessions given to France and the

²⁰² Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 383, 388-92; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 218; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 151, 158.

²⁰³ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 397, 400, 407 (quote), 408-09; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 218, 220-21.

United States would endanger British fishing and the “nursery for seamen.” On February 13th, Shelburne addressed his critics in the House of Lords. He defended his decisions regarding the boundary lines between the United States and Canada, his selection of Richard Oswald, the Newfoundland fisheries, and the British islands in the Caribbean. Regarding the fisheries, Shelburne defended his compromises with the French and explained that “by this part of the treaty future quarrels are guarded against. The concurrent fishery formally exercised was a source of endless strife...” Shelburne reassured his fellow Lords that France received “the least productive part of that coast.” Peace had been Shelburne’s main objective, but the price he had paid for peace was not acceptable to many members of Parliament. In his conclusion, Shelburne addressed the skyrocketing debt and the navy’s deteriorating condition. His closing sentence asked the Lords to “rely on the nobleness of your natures, that in judging of men who have hazarded so much for their country, you will not be guided by prejudice, nor influenced by party.”²⁰⁴ Shelburne received neither request. Caleb Whitefoord, the secretary for Richard Oswald, ironically wrote, “Blessed are the Peacemakers...for of all mankind none are so apt to be traduced, vilified and misrepresented as your Peacemakers. Is it not amazing that one man who plunges a nation into all the horrors of a ruinous war should be universally applauded, and another man who extricates them out of it should be cursed and abused.”²⁰⁵ Shelburne was Britain’s “blessed peacemaker.”

The dissatisfaction with the preliminary treaties was pinned to Shelburne. He was condemned for giving away too much. On February 24th, the Earl of Shelburne resigned. He was

²⁰⁴ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 418; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 236-41; William Petty and Great Britain Parliament House of Lords, “The Speech of the Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne, in the House of Lords, on Monday, February 13, 1783, on the articles of peace,” University of Cambridge Library, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale (1783), accessed 19 March 2021, 1-5, 6 (quote), 7, 8 (quote), <https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/i.do?p=ECCO&u=txshracd2597&id=GALE|CW0106238054&sPage=5&v=2.1&it=r>.

²⁰⁵ Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 242 (quote).

succeeded by William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, the Duke of Portland, with Lord North and Charles Fox as Secretaries of State. The final peace negotiations returned to Shelburne's political rival. Fox immediately replaced Richard Oswald with David Hartley and Alleyne Fitzherbert with George Montagu, the Duke of Manchester. Fox also convinced Vergennes to settle for "concurrent" instead of "exclusive" rights to the Newfoundland fisheries. Although France gained additional fishing regions in the treaty, it were not given its desired "exclusive" rights to them.²⁰⁶ On September 3rd, Adams, Franklin, and Jay met Hartley at the Hôtel d'York and signed the definitive treaty of peace. At Versailles, the Duke of Manchester signed the definitive treaties with France and Spain. It was the end of the American Revolutionary War, and the end of the first British Empire. Months earlier, while still in Paris, a Frenchmen had mocked Whitefoord that "the Thirteen United States would form the greatest empire in the world." With his usual comedic cleverness, Whitefoord replied, "Yes, sir...and they will *all* speak English; every one of 'em."²⁰⁷

The preliminary peace treaty and the definitive peace treaty signed the following year between the United States and Britain were almost identical. Article 1 acknowledged the United States as "free sovereign and independent states." Article 3, which addressed the use of the Newfoundland fisheries, did not change at all between the two versions. The United States and its citizens were guaranteed the "right to take fish...on the Grand Banks and on all the other Banks of Newfoundland, also in the Gulph of St. Lawrence." They were given the "liberty to take fish...on such parts of the coast of Newfoundland." They were not permitted to dry fish on Newfoundland, but the treaty stated they had the "liberty to dry and cure Fish in any of the

²⁰⁶ Ritcheson, "The Earl of Shelburne and Peace with America," 341; Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 150, 158-59; Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 252, 262; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 426, 427 (quote).

²⁰⁷ Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 382 (quote), 435-36.

unsettled Bays Harbours and Creeks of Nova Scotia, Magdalen Islands, and Labrador.”²⁰⁸ As with most peace treaties during the eighteenth century, interpretation was the driving force behind future conflicts. The French scored two major victories in Newfoundland. While Article 2 of their peace treaty outlined that “the King of Great Britain shall preserve in full right the island of Newfoundland,” Article 5 assured that “His Britannic Majesty will cede in full right to his most Christian Majesty the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.” The second win for France was the extended fishing territory along the west coast of the island. In Article 3, France “renounces the right of fishing...from Cape Bonavista to Cape St. John,” but instead its western boundary was extended all the way down to “Cape Raye.” This was the location the French had assumed was “Pointe Riche” given to them under Article 13 of the Treaty of Utrecht which the British had declared was further north. It is fitting that Article 3 began with the desire to “prevent quarrels which have hitherto arisen between the two nations of England and France...” and thus, finally putting to rest a seventy-year-old debate.²⁰⁹

In 1788, Parliament passed “a Bill to enable His Majesty to make such Regulations as may be necessary, to prevent the Inconvenience which might arise from the Competition from His Majesty’s subjects and those of the Most Christian Majesty, in carrying on the Fishery on the Coasts of the Island of Newfoundland.” The bill allowed the British King to supply orders if needed to the Governor of Newfoundland which allowed for the removal of British fishing stations on the areas where the French fishermen were permitted to dry their fish. This bill continued the actions made in good faith by Britain to reduce the contention between British and

²⁰⁸ *Preliminary Articles of Peace between Great Britain and the United States of America* in Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 444-47; *The Definitive Treaty of Peace* in Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 461-65 (quoted).

²⁰⁹ *Preliminary Articles of Peace between Great Britain and France* in Fitzmaurice, *Life of William*, Vol 2, 448-52 (quoted); Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 210; Newton, “Newfoundland, To 1783,” 144.

French fishermen. However, reports given to Parliament and the reality found on the coasts of Newfoundland often varied drastically from season to season.²¹⁰

The United States exited the American Revolutionary War with a newfound independence, and therefore, the war became a revolution and not a squashed rebellion. Trade networks between Britain and the United States helped both countries recover after the war. Of course, all was not peaceful after the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Disputes over the exact boundary line between the United States and Canada continued to cause tension. Those tensions increased as Britain refused to leave the Great Lakes region, and the United States refused to settle its pre-war debts. By 1812, the two countries would be at war again.²¹¹ On the other hand, France left the war in tremendous debt with growing conflicts at home. Less than ten years later, the French Revolution forever altered the country.²¹²

After losing thirteen colonies in North America, Britain turned its attention to the East. This marked change shaped the new empire that formed from the remains of the old. Britain rebuilt its navy and increased its reach over India and also the Caribbean. In North America, Loyalists fled to Canada which grew in population. Nova Scotia became the “new” New England for Britain as trade and fishing increased. The American Revolutionary War was the ending of the chapter depicting the emerging British Empire and the beginning of the next chapter

²¹⁰ Great Britain Parliament, “A Bill to enable His Majesty to make such Regulations as may be necessary, to prevent the Inconvenience which might arise from the Competition of His Majesty’s Subjects and those of the Most Christian King, in carrying on the Fishery on the Coasts of the Island of Newfoundland,” *Eighteenth Century Online Collection*, GALE (London 1788): 1 (quote), 4 https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=11&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=8&docId=GALE%7CCW0105281348&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCFA&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CCW0105281348&searchId=R2&userGroupName=txshracd2597&inPS=true.

²¹¹ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 60, 150, 162-63; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 142; Peter Marshall, “British North America, 1760-1815,” 382-83.

²¹² Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 60.

launching the rising global power.²¹³ All the while, throughout the eighteenth century, Britain had remained in control of the Newfoundland fisheries. Since gaining dominion of the island after the War of Spanish Succession, and following three additional major wars, the fisheries in the North Atlantic stayed linked to Britain through sovereign possession and trade. Neither the inclusion of the United States nor the increase in area gained by France shook the centuries old connection between Britain and the fisheries. The eighteenth century ended much like it had begun with the Newfoundland fisheries playing a leading role in the British North Atlantic trade network system and occupying the hot seat at all the negotiation tables. The Atlantic cod's place of honor within the Empire had been preserved.

²¹³ Dull, *A Diplomatic History*, 161; Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 139, 143; Innis, *The Cod Fisheries*, 212, 227-28.

Conclusion

The close of the eighteenth century was certainly not the end of the relationship between Great Britain and Newfoundland. The Newfoundland fisheries remained an important part of the second British Empire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What had begun as a few merchant ships braving their way across a dangerous Atlantic Ocean grew into a huge economic enterprise. As trade between Newfoundland and Britain grew, the need to protect it increased. The powerful British Navy developed in response to the rise in trade across the Atlantic.²¹⁴ Blue-water policies soon dictated governmental actions.²¹⁵ As British colonies grew in North America and the Caribbean, the ideology of “empire” spread beyond the British Isles.²¹⁶ Political, religious, and cultural rivalries between the European imperial powers were also transferred across the Atlantic. Disputes that started in Europe to maintain the “balance of power” manifested themselves onto the North American colonies, and often battles were fought across multiple continents.²¹⁷ The eighteenth century witnessed Britain and its European neighbors continuing their pursuit to protect trade, maintain power, and establish dominion across the globe.

Cartography remained one major way to illustrate British imperial sovereignty. As new possessions were captured or exchanged, maps became the visual tool to project dominion and claim ownership.²¹⁸ As the geographical knowledge of North America increased, maps began to depict European territory more accurately. The advancement in map skills did not, however, ease the continual tensions between competing countries over disputed regions. The Newfoundland

²¹⁴ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 8.

²¹⁵ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 144.

²¹⁶ Armitage, “Literature and Empire,” 113; Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, 170-71.

²¹⁷ Gould, *The Persistence of Empire*, 12-13.

²¹⁸ MacMillan, “Sovereignty ‘More Plainly Described’,” 426.

fisheries were no exception to these overlapping claims. As European fishermen flocked to the overstocked fisheries, their investment in this rich trade soon influenced wars and subsequent peace negotiations.

The Newfoundland fisheries took center stage in all the major peace negotiations for Britain during the eighteenth century. In the peace treaties following the War of Spanish Succession, Britain gained the island of Newfoundland but was not able to oust other European countries from the fisheries, particularly its oldest rival France.²¹⁹ Following Britain's enormous territorial victory after the Seven Years' War, France's presence in the Gulf of St. Lawrence region was significantly reduced, but again, the French maintained their rights to the fisheries thanks to the last-minute capture of St. John's to use as a bargaining chip.²²⁰ The American Revolutionary War changed the dynamic of the British Empire forever. After losing thirteen colonies in North America, the British Empire changed directions and began to increase its investments in Asia.²²¹ The Treaty of Paris signed between the British and American diplomats granted American fishermen the "right" to fish in the Banks but only the "liberty" to fish off the coast of Newfoundland.²²² Perhaps the American diplomats should have taken a lesson from Vergennes regarding the importance of wording in peace treaties for France had desperately attempted to gain "exclusive" rights to the Newfoundland fisheries for decades.²²³ Regardless of military wins or losses, Britain remained firmly in control of the Newfoundland fisheries after each peace treaty, although it were never able to completely rid France from the fisheries, or later the United States. All three countries continued to have strong ties to the trade.

²¹⁹ Chadwick, *Newfoundland*, 30.

²²⁰ Humphries, "'A Calamity From Which No Relief Can Be Expected,'" 57.

²²¹ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, 143.

²²² Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 378.

²²³ Irvine, "The Newfoundland Fishery, 269-71; Morris, *The Peacemakers*, 388.

The Newfoundland fisheries established a trade connection between Britain and North America that remained in place for over four hundred years. The British North Atlantic trade network system continually adjusted to the changing relationship between Britain and its colonies in North America, and by adapting, it remained in a prominent position in the British Empire. The Newfoundland fisheries held a place of significance for multiple political and economic reasons. One major factor that contributed to its importance was the growing maritime power of the British Navy.²²⁴ By examining the peace negotiations between Britain and its rivals during the eighteenth century, the continual resurgence of the Newfoundland fisheries debates cannot be ignored. The ongoing struggle over the fisheries speaks volumes to their worth within the British Empire as well as the French Empire and the emerging American Empire. The eighteenth century was a time when Empire was worth fighting for, trade was worth fighting for, and therefore, the Atlantic cod that swam along the coasts of Newfoundland became fish worth fighting for.

²²⁴ Black, *The British Seaborne Empire*, x.

Appendix

Figure 1

George Best, [No Title]²²⁵

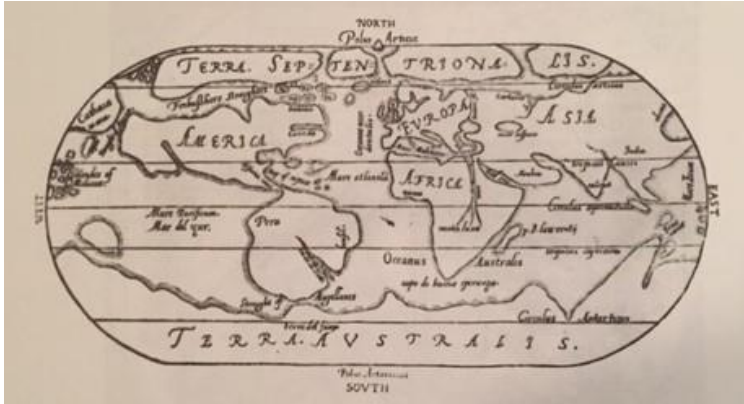
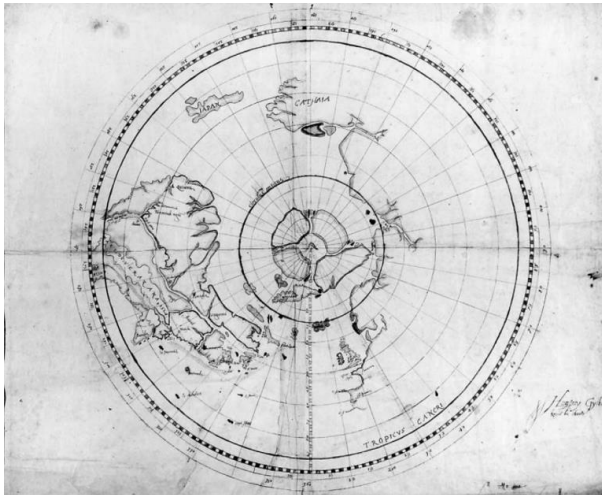


Figure 2

John Dee, [No Title]²²⁶



²²⁵ George Best, [No Title] *World Map*, Woodcut, 215 x 395mm [Map], in *The Mismapping of America*, by Seymour Schwartz (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 114 (figure 25).

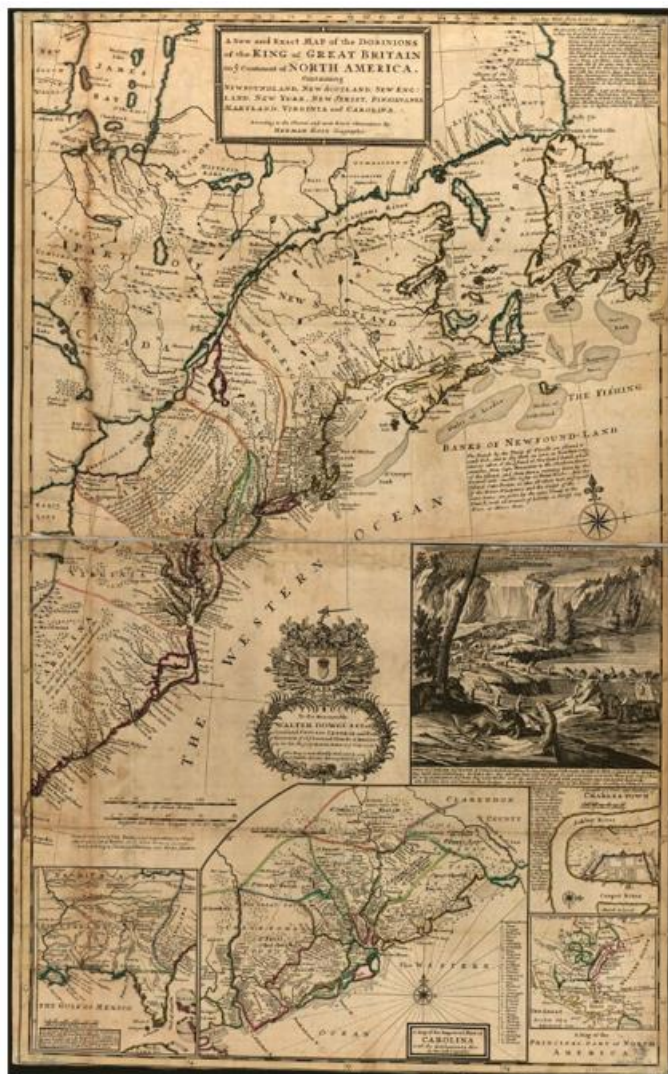
²²⁶ John Dee, *John Dee/Humphrey Gilbert map of the Northern Hemisphere, 1582* [Map], in "Sovereignty 'More Plainly Described': Early English Maps of North America, 1580-1625," by Ken MacMillan, 422 (figure 4), *Journal of British Studies* 42, no. 4 (October 2003): 413-447, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/376461>.

Figure 4

Herman Moll, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America...*²²⁸

Link to larger image:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3300.ct000232/?r=-1.447,-0.072,3.894,1.845,0>.



²²⁸Herman Moll, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America...* [Map], 1715 [i.e. 1731], Scale ca. 1:3,600,000, "A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America Containing Newfoundland, New Scotland, New England, New York, New Jersey, Pensilvania, Maryland, Virginia and Carolina," Library of Congress, G3300 1731 .M6, accessed 29 January 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3300.ct000232/?r=-0.332,0.659,1.879,0.89,0>.

Figure 5

Herman Moll, *To the Right Honourable John Lord Sommers...This Map of North America According to Ye Newest and most Exact Observations...*²²⁹

Link to larger image:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3300.ct007387/?r=-0.281,0.116,1.45,0.687,0>.



²²⁹ Herman Moll, *To the Right Honourable John Lord Sommers...This Map of North America According to Ye Newest and most Exact Observations...* [Map], 1715?, Scale ca 1:15,000,000, "This Map of North America According to Ye Newest and most Exact Observations is most humbly dedicated by your Lordship's most humble servant Herman Moll, geographer," Library of Congress, G3300 1715 .M6, accessed 2 February 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3300.ct007387/?r=-0.281,0.116,1.45,0.687,0>.

Figure 6

Thomas Jefferys, *North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville, Improved with the Back Settlements Virginia and Course of Ohio, Illustrated with Geographical and Historical Remarks*²³⁰

Link to larger image: <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/15604090>.



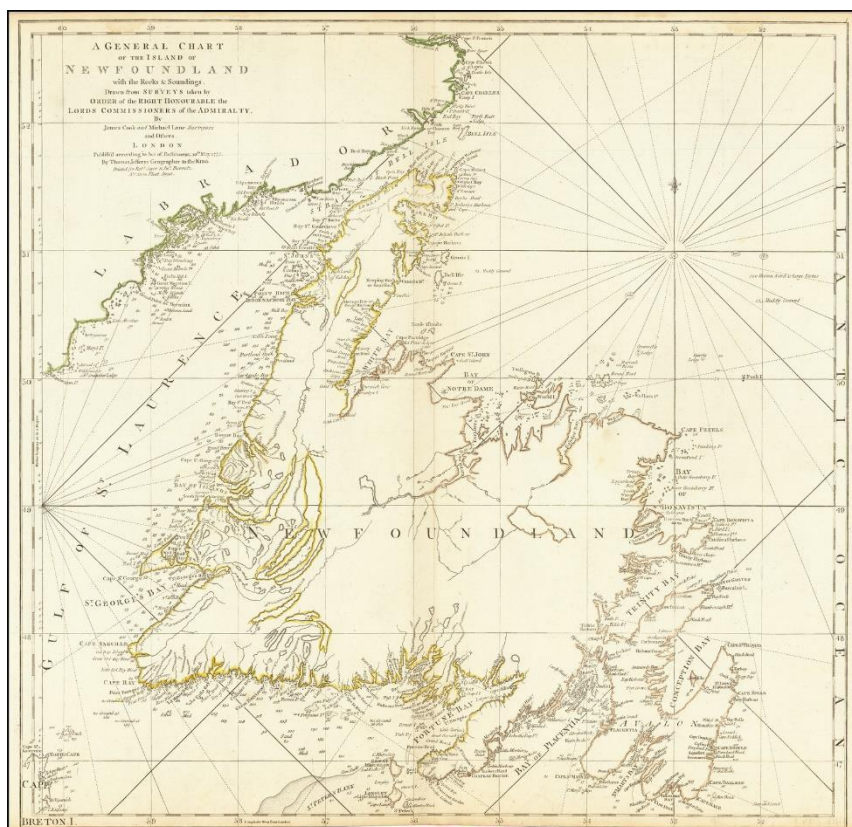
²³⁰ Thomas Jefferys, *North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville, Improved with the Back Settlements Virginia and Course of Ohio, Illustrated with Geographical and Historical Remarks* [Map], 1755, Scale ca 1:6,250,000, "North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville: Improved with the Back Settlements Virginia and Course of Ohio: Illustrated with Geographical and Historical Remarks," Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, BRBL_00427, copy 1, accessed 3 February 2021, https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4200362?image_id=15636924.

Figure 7

Thomas Jefferys, *A General Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with the Rocks and Soundings. Drawn from Surveys taken by Order of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissions of the Admiralty. By James Cook and Michael Lane, Surveyors, and Others*²³¹

Link to larger image:

<https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/66284/a-general-chart-of-the-island-of-newfoundland-with-the-rocks-jefferys>.



²³¹ Thomas Jefferys, *A General Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with the Rocks and Soundings. Drawn from Surveys taken by Order of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissions of the Admiralty. By James Cook and Michael Lane, Surveyors, and Others* [Map], 1775, "A General Chart of the Island of Newfoundland with the Rocks and Soundings. Drawn from Surveys taken by Order of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissions of the Admiralty. By James Cook and Michael Lane, Surveyors, and Others," Barry Lawrence Ruderman, Antique Maps Inc., accessed 23 February 2021, <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/66284/a-general-chart-of-the-island-of-newfoundland-with-the-rocks-jefferys>.

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