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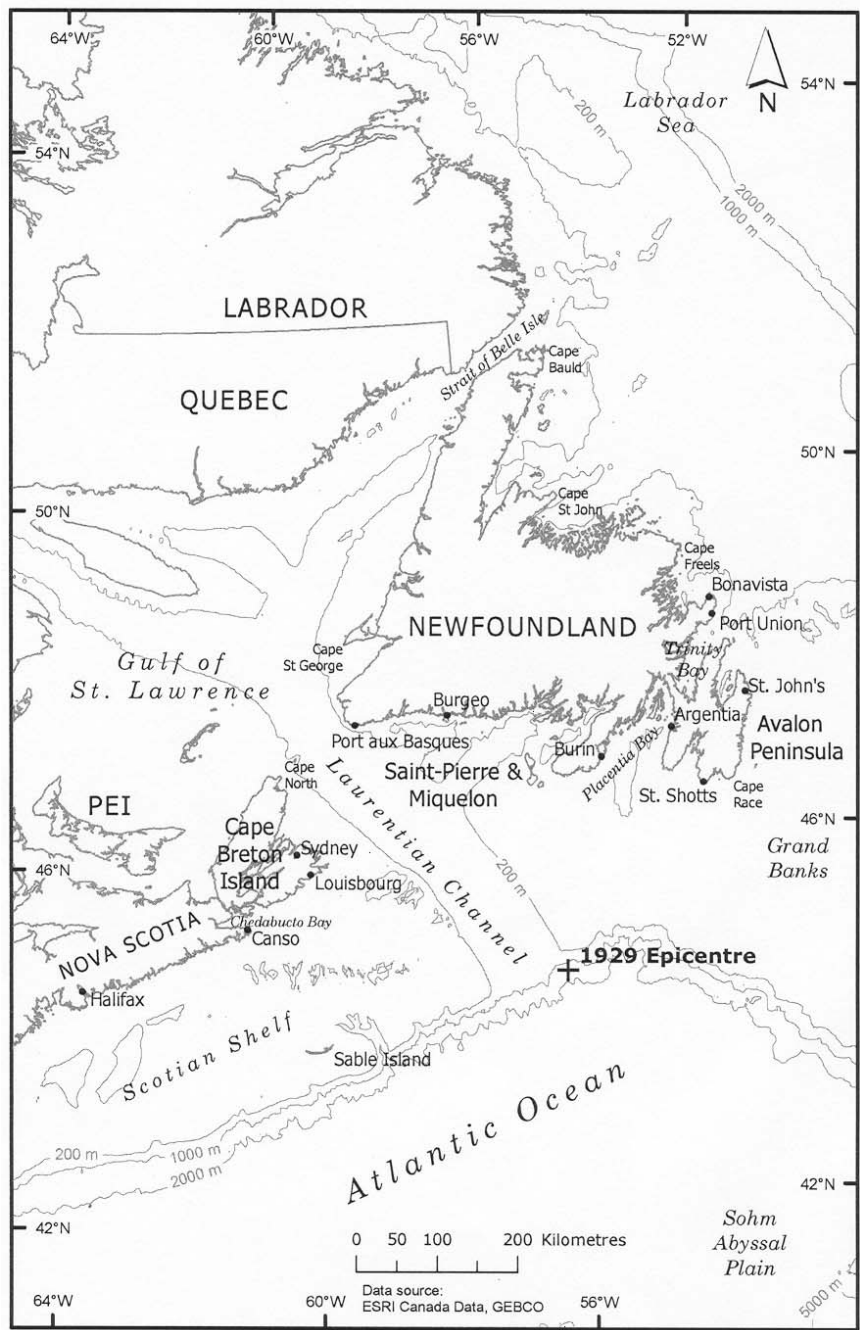
# The Newfoundland Tsunami of November 18, 1929: An Examination of the Twenty-eight Deaths of the “South Coast Disaster”

ALAN RUFFMAN and VIOLET HANN<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

THE “GRAND BANKS” EARTHQUAKE occurred at 1702 (Newfoundland Standard Time [NST]) on Monday, November 18, 1929. It was centred eighteen kilometres beneath the Laurentian Continental Slope, 265 kilometres south of Newfoundland’s Burin Peninsula, in 2,000 metres of water. The event had a surface wave magnitude of  $M_s = 7.2^2$  and it was felt as far afield as New York City and Montreal; there is even a serendipitous felt-report in Bermuda.<sup>3</sup> Onshore the damage from the earthquake’s shaking was restricted to some slumping and minor building damage in Cape Breton Island; Newfoundland, despite its proximity to the epicentre, experienced no physical damage, other than broken crockery shaken off shelves, because most structures were of wood-frame construction built on solid substrates.

On the ocean floor offshore, part of the Laurentian Slope was shaken loose and began an underwater landslide that went on for hours, and flowed at least 1,100 kilometres out onto the floor of the 5,000-metre-deep Sohm Abyssal Plain. It was 23 years before scientists recognized the landslide and its great importance as a dominant ocean process.<sup>4</sup> The 1929 “turbidity currents” moved at speeds of 50 to 70 knots (93-130 km/s) and cut twelve trans-Atlantic telegraph cables in about 28 places. Repairs involved every available cable ship in the Atlantic and continued until August 1930.<sup>5</sup> About 200 cubic kilometres of material was removed over an area of 20,000 square kilometres<sup>6</sup> of the continental slope and rise. This material

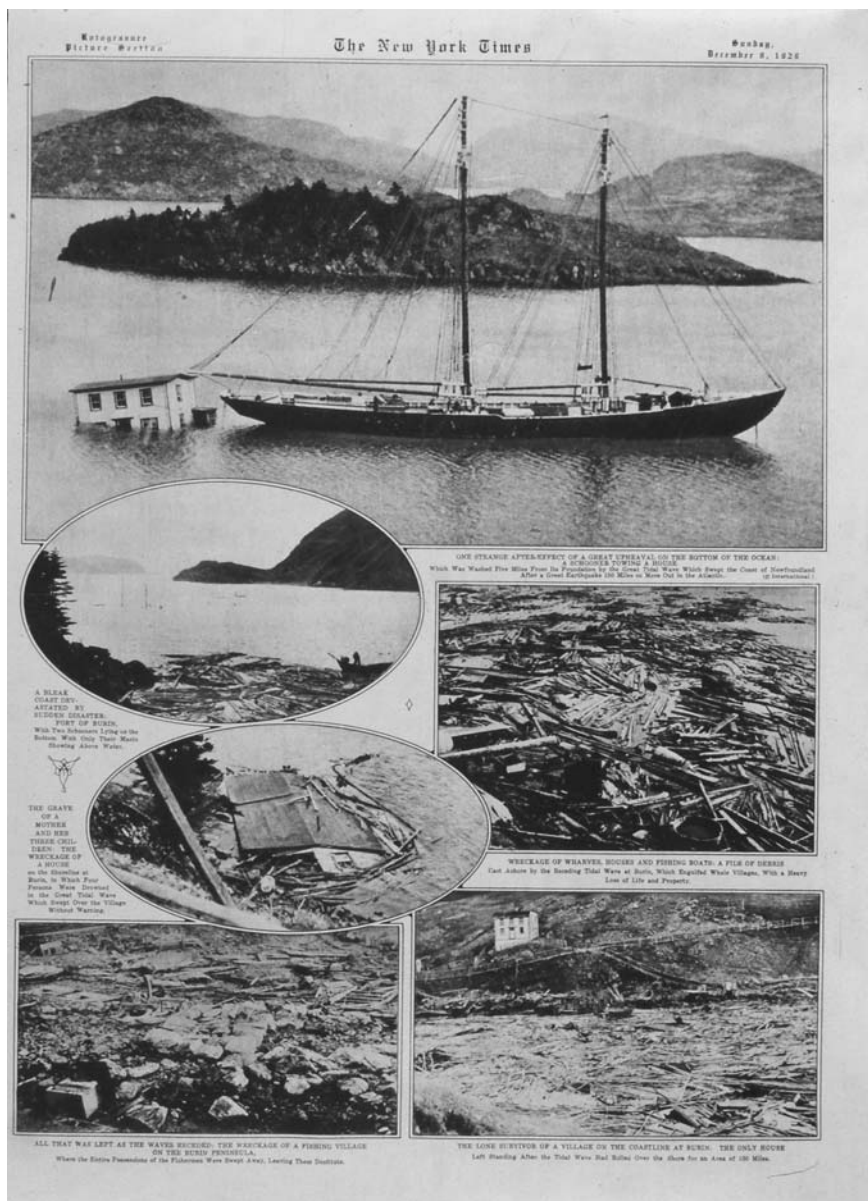


*(Left) Index map of Atlantic Canada with the 200, 1000, and 2000 m bathymetric contours shown offshore. The epicentre of the November 18, 1929, earthquake is shown at the mouth of the Laurentian Channel located in about 2000 m of water. The flow from the turbidity currents formed from the underwater landslides shaken loose by the earthquake continued for well over 20 hours and travelled from the epicentre out to 5000 m in the southeast corner of the map and continued the same distance again for a total of 1100 km well out onto the Sohm Abyssal Plain.*

was redistributed over an area of 150,000 square kilometres<sup>7</sup> out on the abyssal plain; this is an area one-and-one-half times larger than the island of Newfoundland.

The submarine slump spawned a tsunami (often, but incorrectly, referred to as a “tidal wave”) that travelled at about 600 kilometres per hour in the deep ocean water south and eastward from the epicentre; it was seen on tide gauges as far afield as Charleston, South Carolina, the Azores, and the west coast of Portugal; it did minor damage in Bermuda, and was seen on the east coast of Martinique in the eastern Caribbean.<sup>8</sup> The tsunami travelled at an average speed of 105 kilometres per hour over the shallower water on the continental shelf north and westward. The full force of the tsunami struck the south coast of Newfoundland at about 1930 to 2000 NST after dark on November 18. Contrary to popular scientific belief the tsunami did not arrive during a storm; it was a dead calm moonlit night. Luckily most persons were still awake and up and about, which facilitated their escape.

The first indication of the tsunami was a significant withdrawal of the sea. People reported seeing the ocean floor in places where it had never been seen before. Three main pulses swept in. At the heads of the long narrow bays on the Burin Peninsula, the tsunami arrived as foaming, breaking waves near the top of a rising “spring” tide. Over a period of five to ten minutes sea levels rose three to seven metres above normal, lifting houses off their shores, tearing loose moored vessels, and destroying virtually all shore property, wharves, and fish stores. Twenty-five persons lost their lives that night; three died later. The tsunami refracted counter-clockwise around the Avalon Peninsula, and slightly affected northeast Newfoundland in the vicinity of Bonavista and Port Union in the early hours of November 19, six to seven hours after it devastated the south-facing harbours of the Burin Peninsula.<sup>9</sup> It arrived in eastern Nova Scotia at about 2000 (Atlantic Standard Time) and did minor damage in the Sydney Harbour area, Canso, River Inhabitants, Louisbourg, and Chedabucto Bay; in Halifax Harbour the tsunami was seen in Duncan’s Cove, it flowed over the gates of the dry dock for about five minutes, and it was recorded on the tide gauge.<sup>10</sup> The tsunami was not physically observed south of Lunenburg. A winter storm was moving up the eastern seaboard and had moved into Nova Scotia by early evening. Its waves masked the tsunami’s effects for much of southwest Nova Scotia and along the New England coast.



A collage of six of Father James Anthony Miller's eleven photographs taken on November 19, which appeared in The New York Times on December 8, 1929. His photos never appeared in any of the local newspapers in that they were not yet equipped to reproduce photographs. Father Miller was the Catholic parish priest at Burin. (Ruffman collection.)



*One of Dr. Harris Munden Mosdell's two photographs of the debris-filled Eastern Cove Pond behind the beach at Lord's Cove. The tsunami's two, or three, largest waves rose over the beach bar and lifted the houses close to the pond's edge and swept them out to sea, including the Rennie two-storey home seen in the left centre distance between the two fishing stores lifted off the beach. The Rennie home was left grounded in the pond. When the men of the cove paddled out to the house after the tsunami was gone, Sarah Rennie and her three children were found drowned in the kitchen while Margaret survived in her bed on the second floor. (Photographer Dr. H.M. Mosdell; W.M. Chisholm collection.)*

A major storm surge accompanied a winter storm as it arrived in Newfoundland on Tuesday, November 19, just after daybreak.<sup>11</sup> This high storm surge, combined with a “spring” high tide at about 0930 NST, has caused some confusion, in that people remember the very high apparent tide as an effect of the “tidal wave” that caused “the South Coast Disaster.” In fact, the tsunami was long gone from the vicinity of the island of Newfoundland by 0230-0300 NST on November 19. It is also popularly believed by many older residents that the collapse of the fisheries in the early 1930s and the loss of the eel grass was a direct result of the “tidal wave”; this observation appears to be unfounded.

Only four large-magnitude earthquakes are known to have affected the eastern seaboard of North America in historical time. These are the November 18, 1755, event of estimated moment magnitude  $M_w$  6.5-7.0 offshore Cape Ann near Boston, Massachusetts; the August 31, 1886, Charleston, South Carolina, earthquake of estimated  $M_w$  7.0; the November 18, 1929, event of  $M_s$  7.2 in what is now known as the Laurentian Slope Seismic Source Zone; and a November 20, 1933, offshore event of  $M_s$  7.3 in northern Baffin Bay. Thus the probable return rate of a 1929-like event south of Newfoundland is of considerable interest to scientists, and to engi-



neers at the National Research Council of Canada responsible for the National Building Code. The new National Building Code for 2005-2009 has continued to reflect a cautious approach to the Laurentian Slope Seismic Source Zone, and to seismic zones under Passamaquoddy Bay, New Brunswick, and in the Charlevoix region of Québec.<sup>12</sup>

## THE 1929 TSUNAMI DEATH TOLL PROJECT

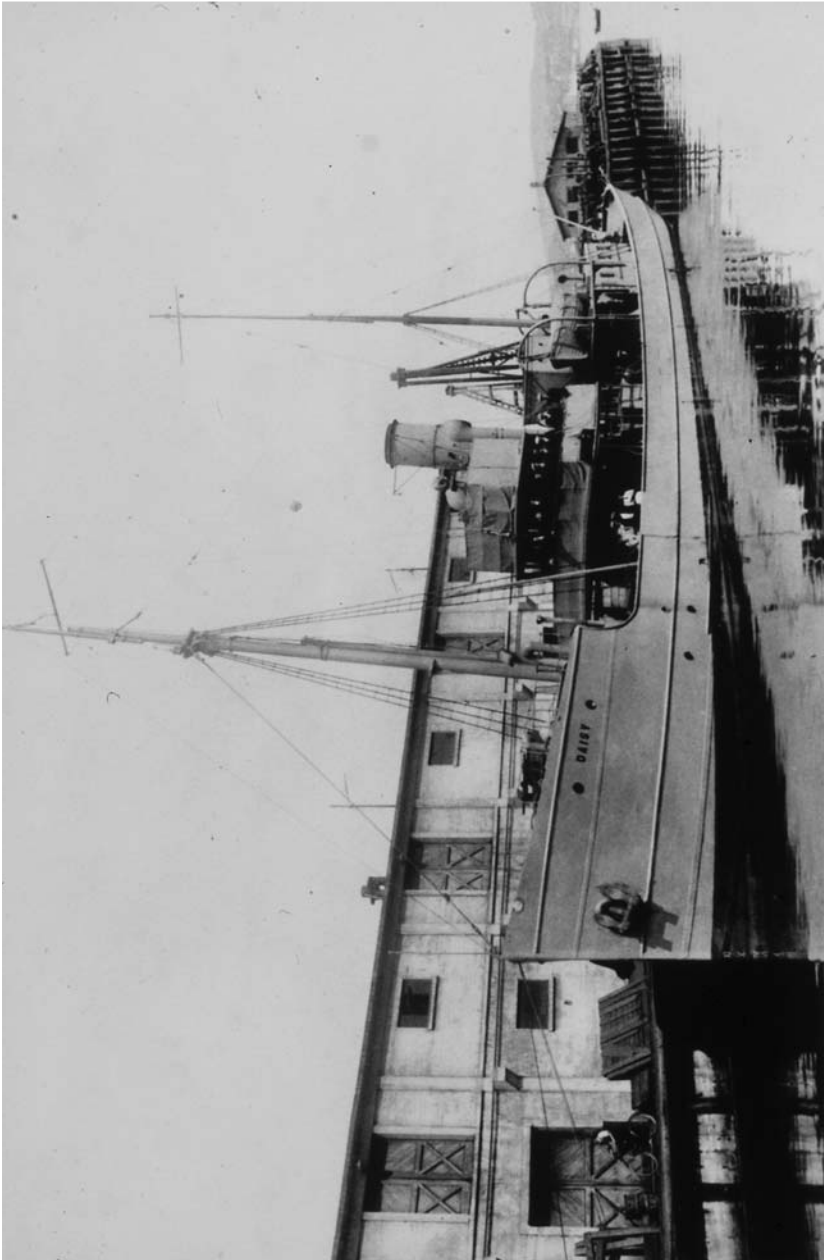
While gathering oral history on scientific questions in 1989, Alan Ruffman realized that the official list of those lost in the tsunami was incomplete, and contained various inaccuracies. Indeed, no accurate official list of the victims has ever been produced by any branch of the Newfoundland government, before or after 1949, and it was this deficiency that the first author set out to correct.

It was also clear that in order to fully understand the effect of the tsunami in Taylor's Bay, where it appeared to reach its maximum vertical height, it was necessary to better understand the family connections in what was in 1929 a small, tightly knit community of sixteen or seventeen houses. At this point Violet Hann was introduced to the project through her family in Lamaline, and the process of documenting those lost in the 1929 tsunami has continued intermittently ever since.

There have been over 90 contacts with different persons in five provinces of Canada and in three countries. Original records have been checked in seven St. John's archival locations and in about ten southern Newfoundland parishes. Letters of enquiry to newspapers located information in some cases, but not in others. For example, it has proved impossible, in spite of using letters to the local newspapers and the local telephone listings, to obtain information about the Traverse family of Oderin Island; Louisa Allen (née Traverse) remains a lesser known victim.

## THE ISOLATION OF THE BURIN PENINSULA

In 1929 the Burin Peninsula was still a quarter of a century away from a road connection to St. John's. Indeed, few of the communities along the south coast of the peninsula were linked by more than a cart or walking track. A road connected Grand Bank, Marystown, and Burin, more or less along the present route of Highways 213, 222, and 221. The main mode of communication between the coastal villages was by boat, and a single-line local telegraph wire tied the settlements together. Some communities had local phones, but there was no long-distance service. The area was connected to the outside world by local fishing boats, regular coastal ferries, the rare wireless radios on a few of the vessels that might visit, and a single strand of telegraph wire that ran north 150 kilometres over the upland barrens to St. John's.



*SS Daisy at the wharf in St. John's. (Ruffman collection, date and photographer unknown.)*



A storm during the weekend of November 16-17, 1929, had broken this tenuous strand of telegraph wire somewhere north of the settled area on the southern coast of the peninsula.<sup>13</sup> When the tsunami arrived, the local telegraph connections between several south coast communities were broken as well. The telegraph station at St. Lawrence ended up floating in the harbour, and that in Lord's Cove was destroyed. Most bridges along the coastal track were floated off or were badly damaged in places like Taylor's Bay, on the Salmonier River between Lamaline and Point au Gaul, and north of Burin on the road to Marystown. None of the vessels in port, such as the revenue cutter *SS Daisy* at Burin, the coastal ferry *SS Argyle* which arrived in the area on its regular outward (westward) run from Argentia on the evening of Monday, November 18, and the *SS Fernfield* which arrived in Burin late on the same day, had operable wireless radios. The *SS Daisy* had a wireless but, unfortunately, as an unknown writer bemoaned in a letter dated December 6, no one on board knew how to operate it.<sup>14</sup> The affected part of the Burin Peninsula was on its own for two and a half days after the tsunami arrived, and small communities were further isolated by the destruction or removal of most, if not all, of their boats.

News of damage in places nearer to St. John's arrived more quickly. On the afternoon of November 19, newspapers there reported an apparent earthquake-induced tsunami at Long Harbour in Placentia Bay and damage at Placentia. *The Evening Telegram's* headline read:<sup>15</sup>

**Yesterday's Earthquake Tremors  
Disturbances Felt Over  
Whole Island**

**Tidal Wave Causes Considerable Damage at  
Long Harbour — Shocks Scatter Mercury  
at Cape Race**

**TIDAL WAVE AT LONG HR.**

A report from Long Hr., Placentia Bay, states that the shocks were felt at six o'clock and again at 10 p.m. Following the disturbance a tidal wave rushed in completely carrying away 76 feet of roadway and causing considerable damage to fishing rooms and stages.

**SUBMARINE LINES IN PLACENTIA**

**GUT SMASHED**

The Anglo Telegraph Co., had a message this morning from Mr. Verran of Placentia, reporting that all the submarine lines crossing the gut had been smashed.

Similarly, *The Daily News* printed an article headlined "[SS] Nerissa Felt Quake But No Tidal Wave."<sup>16</sup>

There had been no recent experience with earthquakes in Newfoundland<sup>17</sup> and none with local tsunamigenic earthquakes. No one suspected the magnitude of the “tidal wave” or its tragic consequences in the south-facing bays and harbours of the Burin Peninsula. In certain harbours, the vagaries of the local coastline geometry that gave a harbour its shelter and safety from storms often served to focus and to constrain the tremendous energy in the tsunami’s pulses. In an attempt to lose energy, the tsunami’s waves tore up the sea floor, built in amplitude, and often became a breaking wave — then surged forward up onto the land, rising up under the buildings on the shore, flakes, and dwellings, “like a river returning.” It was this rise of two to seven metres that took out so much of the shore property and cost the 28 lives.

In the cold light of Tuesday morning, November 19, all attention was turned to the location and recovery of bodies, to caring for the injured and homeless, to the salvage of desperately needed supplies, boats, or floating houses, and to dealing with a winter storm that arrived later in the morning of that desperate day. It seems that no one thought of, or had the power to consider, ordering one of the vessels available in Burin, or in several other ports, to proceed directly to Argentia or to the French island of Saint-Pierre, where telegraph or rail connections could have sounded the alarm by noon. Instead, the devastated area struggled on its own through Tuesday, and again all day Wednesday. It was not until the SS *Portia*, with Captain Wesley B. Kean in charge and with an operating wireless radio on board, arrived in Burin early on the morning of Thursday, November 21, that the following message got out to St. John’s via Cape Race:<sup>18</sup>

**EARTHQUAKE  
CALAMITY ON  
SOUTH COAST**

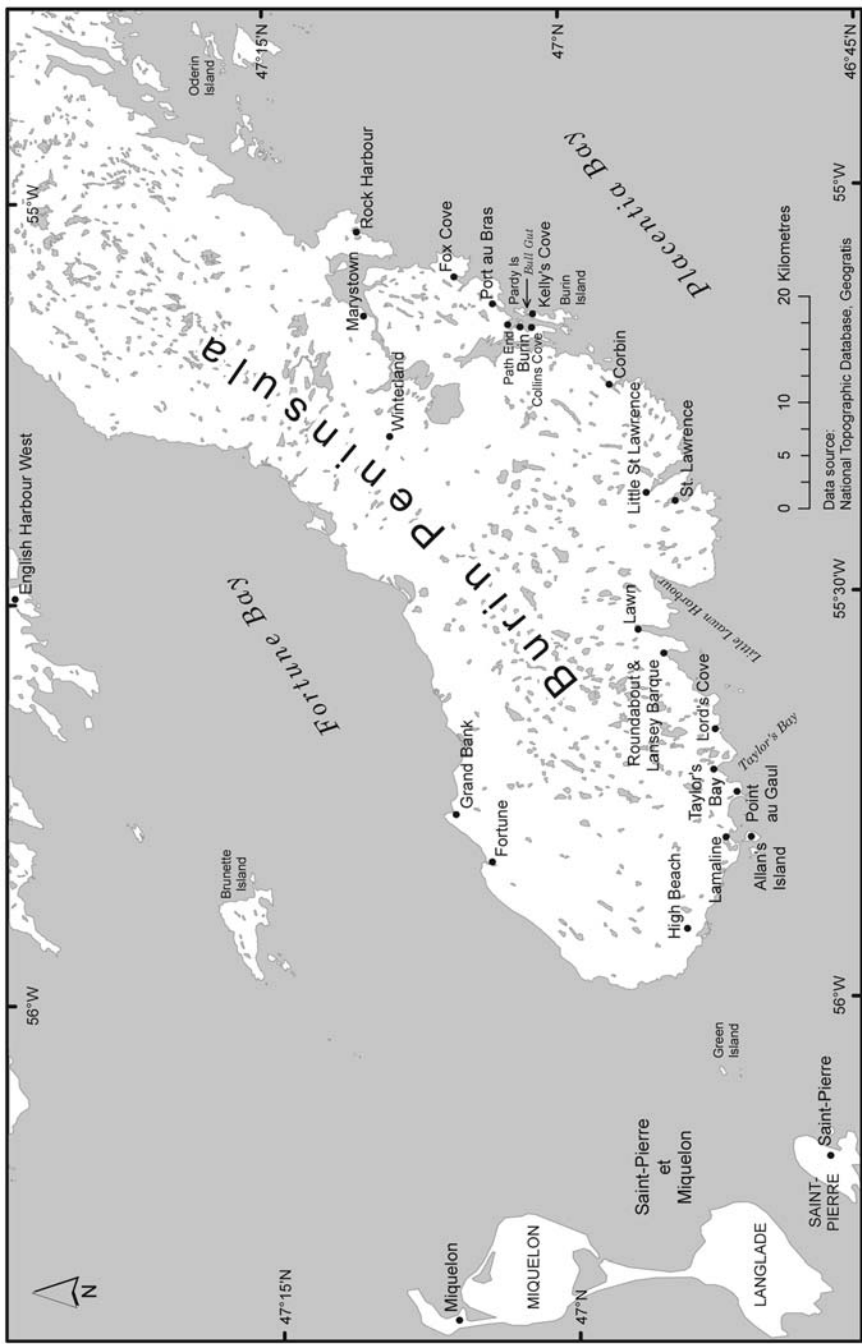
**MESSAGE TO PRIME MINISTER**

**S.S. “PORTIA” via Cape Race**

**Prime Minister, St. John’s.**

Burin experienced very severe earth tremors 5.05 p.m. eighteenth followed at 7.35 p.m. by an immense 15 foot tidal wave which swept away everything along water-front. Sixteen dwelling houses with nine lives [lost] mostly women and children. Four bodies recovered. All communications by wire cut off. Report is that 18 lives have been lost at Lord’s Cove and Lamaline. S.S. “Daisy” rendering every assistance. St. Lawrence also swept; no lives lost. Destruction property terrible and many people left destitute and homeless. Doing all possible to relieve suffering. “Daisy” now at Lamaline. Writing particulars.

**MAGISTRATE HOLLETT.**



(Left) Index map of the Burin Peninsula area affected by the November 18, 1929, tsunami. Deaths occurred in six communities: Allan's Island, Point au Gaul, Taylor's Bay, Lord's Cove, Kelly's Cove, and Port au Bras.

## NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF DEATHS: A CHRONOLOGY

### *(a) When the first messages got out — November 21*

The first reports in the St. John's newspapers of the afternoon of Thursday, November 21, gave nine lives lost in the Burin area and stated that "18 lives have been lost at Lord's Cove and Lamaline" (above). The Burin telegraph operator, Cox, sent longer dispatches to G.J. Veitch, the Superintendent of Postal Telegraphs, which briefly gave the family names of those lost in the Burin area under the headline "*Victims of Disaster*": "at Kelly's Cove ... Mrs. Vincent Kelly and her daughter ... At Port au Bras ... Mrs. Thos. Fudge and three children ... Mrs. Capt. Sam. Bennett and her brother Henry Dibbon ... and Mrs. William Allan ... bodies not yet recovered"<sup>19</sup> (Table 1a).

By the next day, Cox had sent another message to Veitch, which appeared under the headline "26 Persons Swept Away: Burin, 10 p.m., Nov. 21 — furthering my previous report:", which added the death toll from the western end of the disaster area,<sup>20</sup> "Thomas Lockyer, of Allans Island ... ; Point au Gaul ... with eight lives, namely, T.J. Hipditch, Thomas Hipditch, H.P. Hipditch, E.H. Hipditch, Thomas Hillier (oil inspector), Irene Hillier, Mrs. Eliza Walsh, Miss M.A. Walsh; Taylor's Bay ... four lives lost, namely, Mrs. Robert Bonnell, Bartholomew Bonnell, and two children; and Lord's Cove ... four lives lost, namely, Mrs. P. Rennie and three children" (Table 1a). Lower in the same article a message from C.C. Pitman and John Foote, both Justices of the Peace, dated November 21 from Lamaline under the headline "*Known Dead Total Twenty-Seven and Property Loss is Enormous*"; introduced the names "Mrs. Henry Hillier and four grandchildren, ... Mary Ann Walsh, aged spinster, and Elizabeth Walsh, widow" for Point au Gaul, and gave, "At Taylor's Bay, Mrs. Robert Bonnell and her children were drowned; also two children of Bertram Bonnell. A child of George Piercy has since died of injuries" (implying at least six were lost at Taylor's Bay). Pitman and Foote also corrected "Thomas" Lockyer to "James"; "At Allan's Island, James Lockyer, aged 81, was crushed by the sea and died in a few hours" (Table 1a).

### *(b) When the Burin deputation to St. John's arrived — November 22*

Late on Thursday night, November 21, the SS *Daisy* left Burin with a three-person deputation which was to confer with the government in St. John's. It consisted of the Hon. G.A. Bartlett, a noted Burin merchant, Father James Anthony Miller, parish priest of the Burin Roman Catholic parish, and Captain W.H. Hollett. The *Daisy*



*Tsunami victim Fannie Kelly (sitting) beside her home in Kelly's Cove. She died carrying her daughter Dorothy. Their bodies were never found. (Ruffman collection, date and photographer unknown.)*

arrived at Argentia on Friday morning to meet the 9:30 a.m. train, and the deputation was in St. John's by the early afternoon. That evening the deputation met with the Prime Minister, Sir Richard A. Squires, and the Executive Council.

The next day the newspapers printed the report of the Inspector of Revenue Service, J.H. Dee, to the Collector of Customs, which he had finished compiling as the *Daisy* crossed Placentia Bay to Argentia.<sup>21</sup> The *Daisy*, under the command of Captain F. Whelan, had found it impossible to land at Lamaline on the Wednesday and at St. Lawrence early on the Thursday since there were no suitable surviving wharves, a lack of daylight, and insufficient calm weather, "but landed at Point au Gaul [later in the morning of November 21] and got report over the telephone" (Table 1b). The same article contained two messages, which had arrived via the *Daisy*, from the Burin Stipendiary Magistrate Malcolm Hollett, dated November 20 and 21, and addressed to the Prime Minister. These slightly amplified the information in Dee's report (Table 1b).

*(c) When the Meigle returned to Argentia — November 27*

One of the Members of the House of Assembly (MHAS) on the *Meigle* relief team produced his own list of the dead prior to the submission of the team's final report. Having completed its six-day relief voyage, the *Meigle* left Burin early on Wednesday, November 27, so as to put its government relief team on the morning train in Argentia and back in St. John's on the same afternoon. The newspapers the next day carried the latest death toll as a report by the Hon. Dr. Harris Munden Mosdell, Chairman of the Board of Health, to the Hon. Dr. Arthur Barnes, Colonial Secretary (the date was erroneously identified by Mosdell as "On Board Relief Ship Meigle, Placentia Bay, November 25th" — not November 27).<sup>22</sup>

In the section of his report entitled "Loss of Life," Mosdell, the MHA for Burin West, noted: "The loss of life through the tidal wave totals twenty-seven. Twenty-five deaths were due directly to the upheaval. Two other deaths occurred subsequently and were due to shock and exposure." Mrs. Vincent Kelly's daughter was named for the first time; Mosdell named the Hipditch children's father for the first time; and he corrected the Allen's [*sic*] Island loss to James Lockyer (Table 1c). No further lists of those lost in the 1929 "tidal wave" have been published in a Newfoundland newspaper since those of November 28, 1929.

## THE VOYAGE OF THE SS *MEIGLE* AND THE "OFFICIAL" DEATH TOLL

When word of the disaster finally reached St. John's via the wireless message from the SS *Portia* on the morning of November 21, and even before the three-person





(Left) Hillier family photo in front of the family home in Point au Gaul ~1928. Tsunami victim Elizabeth Hillier, grandmother to the three Hepditch children who were lost, is on the right. Her two sons are behind with her husband Henry in front proudly wearing his Temperance League sash. (Reta Kearley collection.)

deputation arrived, the colonial government began to act quickly and decisively. The Hon. H.B. Clyde Lake et al. later stated in their official report that

The first advice as to earthquake shock and subsequent tidal wave was received by the Prime Minister, Sir Richard Squires, shortly before noon on Thursday, November 21st, 1929. He immediately telephoned Mr. H.B. Clyde Lake, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to hold his Department ready for immediate action and during lunch hour directed the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Mr. W[illiam] P[aterson] Rogerson, to get in touch with the Railway Authorities for the commissioning of the S.S. "Meigle" as a relief ship.<sup>23</sup>

In a tremendous effort, the SS *Meigle*, a Newfoundland Railway coastal vessel, and its cargo of government officials, medical personnel, and relief supplies was away from the wharf in St. John's at 9:30 p.m., Thursday, November 21, less than twelve hours after the news of the disaster reached St. John's. The skipper was its regular captain, Albert Burgess, and the complement included the Railway's Marine Superintendent, Captain Martin Gilbert Dalton,<sup>24</sup> and five MHAS. Dalton's role was to liaise with the government party, leaving Captain Burgess and his crew free to navigate the vessel.

The *Meigle* arrived in Burin at 3:30 p.m. the next afternoon. Those on board gave medical assistance and distributed relief supplies during a very busy itinerary: Burin (November 22), Point au Gaul (23), Taylor's Bay (23), Lawn (23), Lord's Cove (24), Lamaline (24), Saint-Pierre to purchase supplies (24, evening), Lawn (25, storm), and St. Lawrence (26), returning to Burin on November 26. The relief team also compiled injury and initial loss reports, which were included in its November 28 report to the Prime Minister.<sup>25</sup>

Magistrate Hollett submitted a report for the area between Corbin and Rock Harbour.<sup>26</sup> The *Daisy* had been sent to Lamaline, St. Lawrence, and Point au Gaul on November 20-21, and Inspector Dee had compiled a similar report for the area from Lamaline to St. Lawrence, which he submitted to Hollett on his return.<sup>27</sup> Both men noted the lives lost in their respective areas. Table 2 is a compiled transcript of the relevant portions of these two reports.

The *Meigle* left Burin very early on the morning of Wednesday, November 27, to connect with the 9:30 a.m. train at Argentia. The relief team arrived back in St. John's by 1:00 p.m. The official report on the "Voyage of Relief Ship *Meigle*"<sup>28</sup> was submitted to Prime Minister Squires on Thursday, November 28, 1929, just under a week after the vessel first left St. John's. The report contained, among other docu-

ments, a “Southwest Coast Disaster Summary,” followed by a “List of Lives Lost In Earthquake Disaster.”<sup>29</sup> This list (full transcript in Table 3) is based on the partial compilations of Hollett and Dee (Table 2) with some minor revisions. “Dibbin” has been corrected to “Dibbon” in Port au Bras, Mrs. P. Rennie’s three children are named in Lord’s Cove, Mr. Bartholomew [*sic*] Bonnell has been removed from the list, leaving only his two unnamed children in Taylor’s Bay, “T.J. Hipditch” is corrected to “Mrs. Henry Hillier” and “Irence” Hillier is changed to “Irene” in Point au Gaul, and finally “Thomas” Lockyer is corrected to “James” on Allen’s [*sic*] Island.

The November 28 list in Table 3 is as close as one can come to an “official” list of those lost in the November 18 tsunami, or what has come to be known as the “South Coast Disaster.” It appears that at no time afterwards was the list revised, despite a year-long relief effort. Indeed, the final report (May 13, 1931) of the South Coast Disaster Committee (originally referred to as the South Coast Disaster Fund [or Relief] Committee), chaired by R.F. Horwood, did not even contain a list of those lost.<sup>30</sup>

## DETAILED COMMUNITY LOSSES

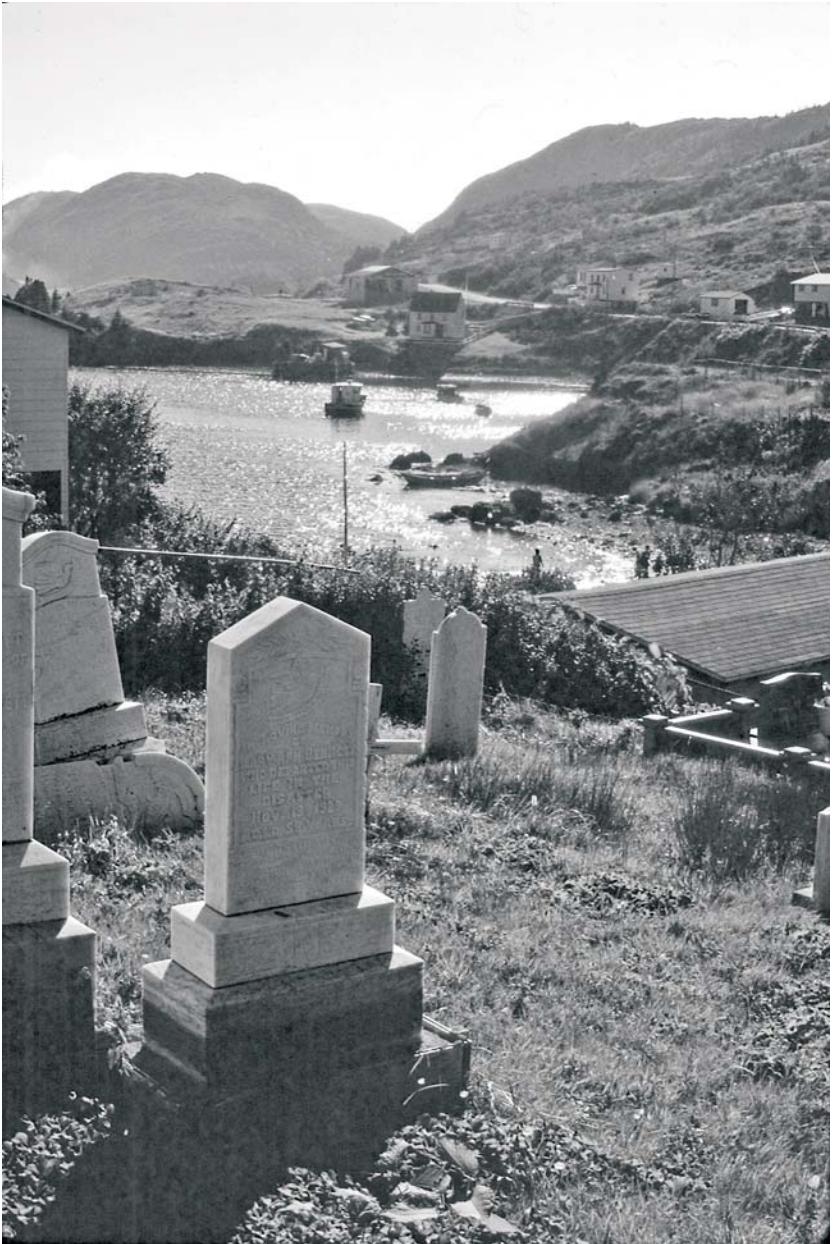
### *(a) Community Loss Tables*

Tables 4 to 9 record our best efforts to fully identify the 1929 tsunami victims from the communities of Port au Bras, Kelly’s Cove (on the north end of Burin Island east of the community of Burin), Lord’s Cove, Taylor’s Bay, Point au Gaul, and Allan’s Island (opposite Lamaline), respectively. The tables list full names, maiden names where relevant, names of spouses and/or parents, date and place of birth and baptism, denomination, age on November 18, 1929, whether the body was recovered, and place and date of burial.

These compilations do not change the number of deaths recorded at the time of the tsunami or immediately following the November 18 event. Twenty-seven is still the correct number. In that sense we agree with the Lake et al. list as found in the SS *Meigle* report of November 28, 1929. However, we have gone well beyond this list, replicated in Table 3, by identifying the unnamed Bonnell child, by defining the full names of most of the victims, especially in the cases of several of the children, by giving married women their own names rather than those of their husbands, by correcting at least eight ages, by providing seven ages where none were originally given, and by correcting the spellings of names.

### *(b) Addition of a Delayed Death in Taylor’s Bay*

However, we have added one death, that of Amelia Alice Bonnell of Taylor’s Bay, who died on March 8, 1933, at age  $\approx 7.8$  years. She had lost her mother Bridget



*View from St. Andrew's Anglican Cemetery in Port au Bras in 1989. The stone in the foreground is that of Mary Ann, or "Minie Sam," Bennett whose body was found by a young boy running across floating tsunami debris filling the harbour in the distance. When he slipped and fell he found himself clutching Mrs. Bennett's hair, according to local knowledge. (Ruffman collection.)*

Susannah Bonnell (née Hillier) and her younger sister Mary Gertrude on the night of the tsunami, and we believe that she succumbed to tsunami-related injuries in the spring of 1933.

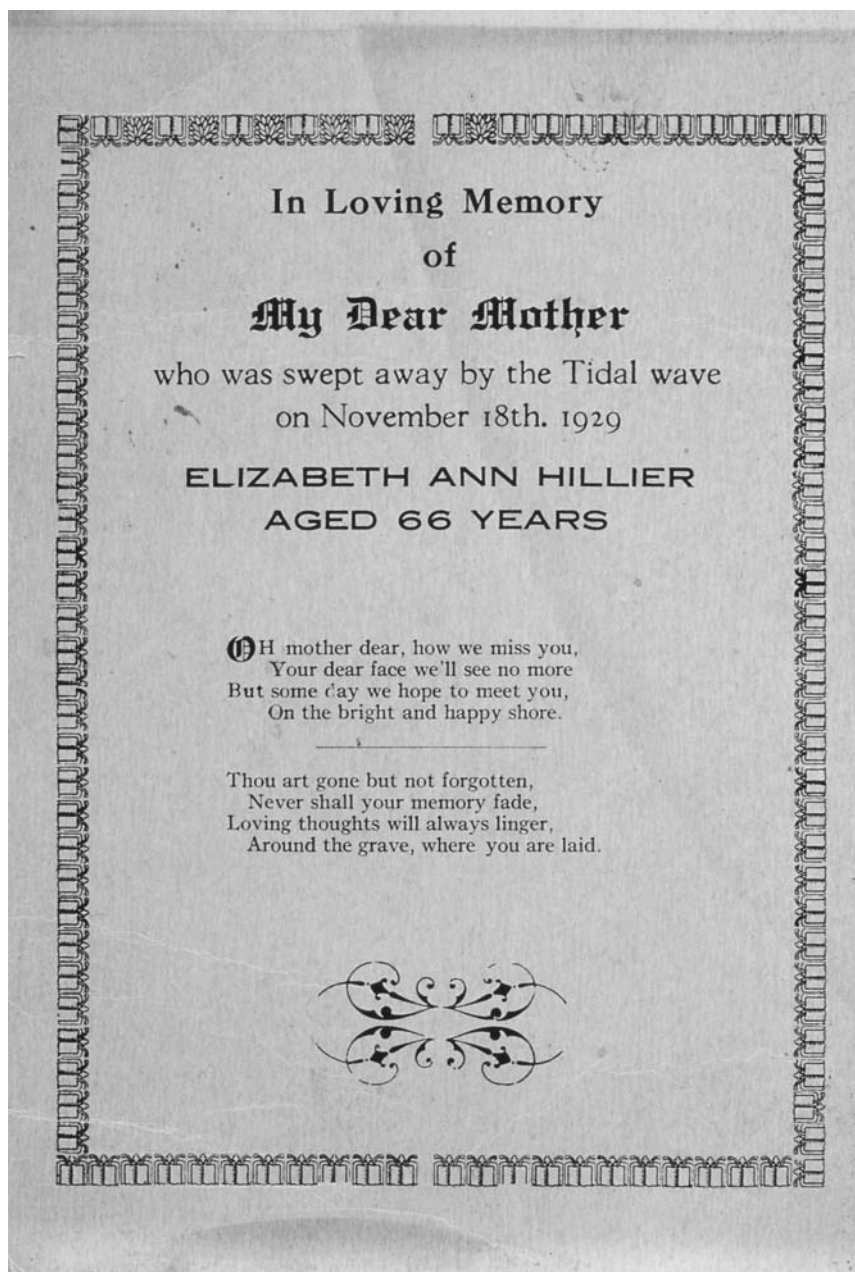
Amelia Alice's aunt, Mrs. Dinah Ford (née Bonnell) of Waterloo, Ontario, has no doubt that her niece died of the effects of the tsunami. She always had a pain in her head after the tsunami, and apparently was always sickly following the event. Mrs. Ford stated in an interview in 1993 that Amelia Alice died of "sand on the brain," and that sand came down out of her nose on death, presumably draining out of sinuses where it had lodged for over three years. Normally a coroner draws a line at one year after an accident or other traumatic event, and by this measure the young girl, who was  $\approx 4.5$  years old at the time of the tsunami, would not be formally classed as a tsunami death.

Few autopsies were performed in rural Newfoundland in the 1920s and 1930s, given a lack of outport doctors, and medical evidence concerning deaths is often lacking. A NONIA nurse<sup>31</sup> provided most of the medical care in the Burin area. The second author knows from her own family's experience in Lamaline that in 1929-1933, when it came to medical care or to a coroner's interest in a death, St. John's "was a world away from the bottom of the Burin Peninsula." It would be desirable to have more detailed and proximate medical evidence about this child's death, but we are convinced by the testimony of the child's aunt that Amelia Alice Bonnell did indeed suffer a lingering death caused by the trauma and her injuries resulting from the devastation of Taylor's Bay by the tsunami. Thus we put the 1929 tsunami death toll at 28.

### *(c) Elimination of a Nova Scotia Death*

For a number of years the senior author believed that there was a twenty-ninth victim.<sup>32</sup> This was John MacLeod, employed in November 1929 as a night security guard in a sawmill owned by R. Dunphy of Point Tupper, Nova Scotia. The sawmill and the guard's shed were on a barge anchored in Lower River Inhabitants in Richmond County, Cape Breton Island. The barge broke loose as the tsunami ran north up the river, and was smashed into the underside of the new railroad bridge some distance upstream. The barge's topsides were crushed and destroyed. The *Halifax Herald* of Monday, December 16, 1929 (p. 3) reported that MacLeod, a "middle aged man," was missing, and that "interested parties are making inquiries in the vicinity in the hope that something definite will be found out within the next few days." The matter never reappeared in the Nova Scotia newspapers. It was eventually established by the first author that MacLeod was at a local home sharing a meal when the tsunami destroyed his place of work, and he was removed from the list of the 1929 tsunami victims.<sup>33</sup>





Memory card for Elizabeth Hillier of Point au Gaul. (R. Kearley collection.)



## BODY RECOVERIES AND BURIALS: COMMUNITY MEMORY

### *(a) Gravestones and Wooden Markers*

Six of the tsunami victims' bodies were never recovered: Richard Henry Dibben (of John), age 60.5 and Anna Eliza Dibben Fudge (Hannah), age 7.2, both of Port au Bras; Frances Elizabeth Kelly (Fannie), age 42.2 and her daughter Dorothy Jane Kelly, age 10.0, of Kelly's Cove; and Mary Gertrude Bonnell, age 1.1 and her cousin John Lewis Bonnell, age 3.1, both of Taylor's Bay, were not recovered and have no onshore marker in a local cemetery. The five recovered Port au Bras victims were buried in the local St. Andrew's Anglican Cemetery, but four of these burials appear to be unmarked, and that of Mary Ann Bennett is mismarked on the gravestone as November "19", 1929 (see photo, p. 113). The burial of Gertrude Fudge, whose body was not found until the next spring, seems not to have been recorded in the St. Andrew's church records. The four Rennie family victims from Lord's Cove have wooden markers in the St. Elizabeth's Catholic Cemetery in Lord's Cove. The four recovered bodies of Taylor's Bay victims are all buried in St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Cemetery in Lamaline, with markers.

Two of the eight Point au Gaul victims and James Lockyer of Allan's Island were buried in St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery on Allan's Island. We have not been able to locate grave markers for the two Point au Gaul victims buried here (Mary Elizabeth Walsh and her sister-in-law Mary Ann Walsh).<sup>34</sup> The other six victims from Point au Gaul were buried in St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Cemetery in Lamaline, and most had markers in 1994-1995. However, several of them are only wooden crosses and subject, in the short term, to loss or toppling over.

### *(b) Post-tsunami Writing and Memory*

Initially the November 18, 1929, earthquake and tsunami attracted only brief scientific interest. In these early reports the tsunami and its effect in Newfoundland got short shrift and deaths were seldom addressed.<sup>35</sup> It was not until the 1952 scientific realization that turbidity currents had been caused, which then progressively ripped up and broke the sea-floor telegraph cables, that the 1929 events received renewed attention. Marine geological research at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and at Dalhousie University in the 1980-2000 period has concentrated on the turbidity current process and the deposits laid down in the deep ocean — i.e., the offshore signature of the earthquake.<sup>36</sup> In the mid-1980s scientific attention turned to locating the onshore signature of the tsunami.<sup>37</sup> One of the best examples of a tsunami-laid sand deposit is found at the head of Taylor's Bay.<sup>38</sup>

For the first 60 years after the tsunami, little attention was paid to the social or economic effects of the 1929 tsunami. Little oral history or folklore associated with the onshore effects of the tsunami were collected. Even today the "scientific" as-



*Cross marking the graves of the three Hepditch children and their grandmother Elizabeth Hillier as found in February 1995. (Ruffman collection.)*

pects of the event draw more research attention than those associated with its effects on the residents and the economy of the area.

Margaret Duley, a Newfoundland writer of the mid-twentieth century, wrote a novel based on the event in 1941;<sup>39</sup> this contained no attempt to document the deaths from the 1929 event. The only Canadian government report on the “Grand Banks” Earthquake came in 1948 just before the Dominion of Newfoundland confederated with Canada to become the tenth province. W.W. Doxsee gave no list of those lost and did nothing more than report a “summary given in the Saint [*sic*] John’s *Free Press* in the issue of November 26, 1929.”<sup>40</sup> Gerald Jones writing on “The South Coast Disaster” in the mid-1970s used the list compiled by the *Meigle* relief expedition<sup>41</sup> as have most other modern writers or journalists.

One of the first uses of the oral history of the tsunami on the Burin Peninsula came with the work of the senior author on the Burin Peninsula in a report for Columbia University.<sup>42</sup> A major case study of the tsunami in St. Lawrence harbour conducted oral history interviews and contained an early version of our reassessment of the human losses in the tsunami as an appendix.<sup>43</sup>

Writers in the current century, especially with the renewed interest in tsunamis as a natural marine hazard that came with the December 26, 2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami, have continued to use the 1929 *Meigle* information (as in Table 3). Recent publications have not rectified these errors. Garry Cranford’s *Tidal Wave, A List of Victims and Survivors — Newfoundland, 1929* in fact has no list of the tsunami victims at all.<sup>44</sup> Maura Hanrahan’s *Tsunami: The Newfoundland Tidal Wave Disaster*<sup>45</sup> cites and transcribes some of the documentation, but she too does not list the victims.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador cannot supply, if requested, an official list of those lost in the 1929 “tidal wave.” The memory of those who were lost has faded away in the halls of government. But this is not so in the memories and in the folk and family lore of many Newfoundlanders, especially of the residents of the Burin Peninsula. Our final Table 10 gives what we think is the best list of those lost; Tables 4 to 9 attempt to fit each person into their community. We hope that our seven final tables will serve as at least a printed memorial to each victim of Canada’s most tragic known historic earthquake and tsunami, the November 18, 1929, “South Coast Disaster” on the Burin Peninsula of Newfoundland.

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The senior author was able to piggyback his oral history research in the field on the Burin Peninsula over seven visits on the shoulders of several scientific projects. These included the Geological Survey of Canada, Geophysics Division in 1986-87,

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>With the help of many residents and former residents of the affected communities.

<sup>2</sup>In seismology of the early twentieth century Carl F. Richter developed an open-ended scale of magnitude "ML" which measured the largest amplitude of the seismic vibration, or ground movement, regardless of the period. One problem with his scale was that it tended to saturate for large earthquakes, and another was that it was designed for the California geology and the attenuation with distance of only one area of the world.

Seismologists moved to find another measure of magnitude, and for a time settled on the surface wave magnitude " $M_s$ " since all but the deeper earthquakes produce surface waves. Instrumentally recorded earthquakes can easily have the surface wave amplitudes extracted usually at the longer periods of seismic vibrations of about 20 seconds. Corrections can be made for global attenuation relations to make surface wave magnitudes,  $M_s$ , more or less independent of local geological structure. The  $M_s$  magnitude measures a specific part of the earthquake's waveform and is generally felt to be more reliable for the largest events than Richter's original ML scale.

In recent years the moment magnitude, or " $M_w$ " scale, has been developed by seismologists to include a broader range of earthquakes and all areas of the globe. All magnitude scales are open ended, meaning they can accommodate the smallest through to the largest events, and they are logarithmic, not linear. Thus each integral increase in magnitude denotes a ten-fold increase in the amplitude of the seismic wave (i.e., in the violence of the shaking) and about a 32-fold increase in the release of the seismic energy.  $M_w$  can now be calculated almost automatically from parameters read by modern digitally recording seismometers. As a result, whenever an earthquake occurs, the worldwide seismological network produces an epicentre location and a magnitude within about five minutes (personal

communication, Allison L. Bent, May 10, 2006, Natural Earthquake Hazards Program, Geological Survey of Canada, Ottawa, ON). If readers google “IRIS” for Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology, then click on the logo, a coloured world map pops up with “today’s” earthquakes blinking along with yesterday’s, the last two weeks’, and the last five years’ seismic events colour coded and showing their magnitude.

For older instrumentally recorded earthquakes where such digital data are not available, one can make painstaking measurements on the analogue recordings and can recover quite reasonable estimates of the surface wave magnitude of an historic earthquake. In the case of the November 18, 1929, event, the Geological Survey of Canada has examined seismic records worldwide for this earthquake to check the surface wave magnitude  $M_s$ ; Bent, Allison L. 1995. A Complex Double Couple Source Mechanism for the  $M_s$  7.2 1929 Grand Banks Earthquake. *Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America*, Vol. 85, No. 4, pp. 1003-1020; Dewey, James W. and David W. Gordon. 1984. *Map Showing Recomputed Hypocenters of Earthquakes in the Eastern and Central United States and Adjacent Canada, 1925-1980*. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, Miscellaneous Field Studies, Map MF-1699, approximate scale 1:2,500,000, accompanying pamphlet, 39 pp. Dewey and Gordon give  $t_0$  as 2032:00.2 seconds Universal Time (UT), or Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), or 1702:00.2 seconds NST, with a geographic position of the epicentre of 44.691°N, 56.006°W, or 44°41’27.6"N, 56°00’21.6"W.

<sup>3</sup>Ruffman, Alan. 1994. The November 18, 1929 ‘Tidal Wave’: Canada’s Most Tragic Earthquake [Abstract]. *Atlantic Geology*, Vol. 30, No. 2, July, pp. 157-158.

<sup>4</sup>Doxsee, W.W. 1948. The Grand Banks Earthquake of November 18, 1929. *Publications of the Dominion Observatory*, Canada Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Ottawa, Ontario, Vol. 7, No. 7, pp. 323-335; Heezen, B.C. and M. Ewing. 1952. Turbidity Currents and Submarine Slumps, and the 1929 Grand Banks Earthquake. *American Journal of Science*, Vol. 250, No. 12, December, pp. 849-873; Heezen, B.C., D.B. Ericson and Maurice Ewing. 1954. Further Evidence for a Turbidity Current Following the 1929 Grand Banks Earthquake. *Deep-Sea Research*, Vol. 1, pp. 193-202; Heezen, B.C. and C.L. Drake. 1964. Grand Banks slump. *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 221-225.

<sup>5</sup>The cable breaks and their extensive repairs were documented in considerable detail by the Hydrographer from the Western Union Cable Company in an extensive internal unpublished report: de Smitt, V[ladimir]. P. 1932. *Earthquakes in the North Atlantic Ocean as Related to Submarine Cables*. Unpublished internal compilation, Western Union Telegraph Company, Office of General Plant Manager, New York City, New York, April, 47 numbered pp., 2 lead-in pages, 3 diagrams, 3 maps, 4 photographs of cable breaks all unpagged, mimeographed, 59 total pp. that was later published with greatly reduced detail and fewer maps, figures, and photographs; de Smitt, V[ladimir]. P. 1932. *Earthquakes in the North Atlantic ocean as Related to Submarine Cables*. U.S. National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., Thirteenth Annual Meeting, April 28-29, Washington, D.C., *Transactions of the American Geophysical Union*, Vol. 13, June, Section on Seismology, Symposium on the Application of Seismology to the Study of Ocean-Basins, pp. 103-109.

V.P. de Smitt in his very rare, April 1932, unpublished report (one copy found by the senior author in early April 2006 after a year-long search) noted: “This is the first time in [the 63-year] history [of trans-Atlantic cables] that progressive destruction similar to this has



been recorded by the consecutive breaks in telegraph cables” (p. 19). All the cable observations of de Smitt were consistent with an underwater landslide, or the dense slurry of a turbidity current, piling up against a cable, abrading it and stretching it to beyond the breaking point. Twenty-eight breaks could be firmly established with the time and location of the break obtained from the shore cable station that was still connected to the cable out to the break. Twelve initial breaks close to the epicentre occurred synchronously with the  $t_0$  of the earthquake (1702 NST; 2032 GMT, November 18, 1929).

Sixteen other cable breaks occurred from 59 min up to 13 hr 17 min after the earthquake (at 0619 NST, November 19, 1929; Table “Cable Breaks,” pp. 20-21). De Smitt calculated what he called the “Progression of Destruction” and what we now know is the speed of the turbidity currents, or of the slurry, that comprised the underwater landslides. They began moving at 93 and 130 km/hr in two locations and progressively slowed to the south and southeastward to an average speed of 88.5 km/hr by the time the turbidity current had reached 269 km from the epicentre, an average of 50.4 km/hr to reach a distance of 454 km and an average speed of 41.9 km/hr to reach a distance of 556 km. In the last two intervals, where the break times permit one to calculate the turbidity current’s interval velocity, it was moving at 31.0 km/hr, then after 13 hr 17 min it was still moving across the ocean floor at 23.9 km/hr (p. 23).

One of the twelve broken cables was restored as soon as December 31, 1929, after 35 days of work by the cable ship *J.W. Mackay*, but in one case repairs went on until August 31, 1930, some 9.5 months after the earthquake and necessitated 109 days of work by the cable ship *Cambria*. Eight cable ships and about 855 days of cable ship repair time were required to restore service on all twelve cables.

<sup>6</sup>Hughes Clarke, John Edward. 1988. *The Geologic Record of the 1929 “Grand Banks” Earthquake and its Relevance to Deep-Sea Clastic Sedimentation*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 171 pp.

<sup>7</sup>Hughes Clarke, John E., Alexander N. Shor, David J.W. Piper and Larry A. Mayer. 1990. Large-scale current-induced erosion and deposition in the path of the 1929 Grand Banks turbidity current. *Sedimentology*, Vol. 37, pp. 613-629.

<sup>8</sup>Romer, [le] Chef du Service de Physique du Globe de la Martinique. 1932. Martinique Raz de Marée et Marées de Tempête à la Martinique du XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle à Nos Jours. Union Géodésique et Géophysique Internationale, *Annales de la Commission pour l’Étude de Raz de Marée*, Paris, France, No. 2, Section II, Documents scientifiques, Renseignements sur les évènements du littoral par la mer, pp. 136-141.

<sup>9</sup>*The* (St. John’s) *Evening Telegram*, November 21, 1929, p. 6, reported that the tsunami arrived at 2:20 a.m. NST Tuesday, November 19, 1929. *The* (St. John’s) *Daily News*, November 22, 1929, p. 5, reported exactly the same text as being the observation of Sir William Coaker, who had come to St. John’s from his home on the Bonavista Peninsula.

<sup>10</sup>Johnstone, J.H.L. 1930. The Acadian-Newfoundland Earthquake of November 18, 1929. *Proceedings and Transactions of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science*, Session of 1929-30, presented February 12, Vol. 17, Part 4, December, pp. 223-237.

<sup>11</sup>Ruffman, Alan, Gavin Buchan, Andrew Smith, Keith Stoodley and Syd O. Wigen. In Preparation. *Study of North Atlantic Ocean Tsunamis: A Compilation of Eastern Canadian Historic Tsunamis, including the Monday, November 18, 1929 ‘Grand Banks’ event*. Geomarine Associates Ltd., Halifax, Nova Scotia.

<sup>12</sup>Ruffman, Alan. 1991. Notes on the Recurrence Rate of a November 18, 1929-like event in the Laurentian Slope (LSP) Seismic Source Zone or of similar shelf-edge/slope events off Eastern Canada. In John Adams, comp., *Proceedings, Geological Survey of Canada Workshop on Eastern Seismicity Source Zones for the 1995 Seismic Hazard Maps*. March 18-19, Ottawa, Ontario. Geological Survey of Canada, Open File No. 2437(1991), Part 2, pp. 371-396.

<sup>13</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 21, p. 6. Editorial entitled "The South Coast Disaster."

<sup>14</sup>W.J.S. 1929. Letter in *Evening Telegram*, December 9, 1929, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 19, p. 6. More details on the Placentia disruption appeared in the *Daily News*, November 22, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup>*Daily News*, November 20, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup>Staveley, Michael, Sandra Kavanagh and Lourdes Meana. 1984. *Historical Seismicity of Newfoundland*. Contract Report to Canada Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Earth Physics Branch, Division of Seismicity and Geomagnetism, Ottawa, Ontario, March, 31 pp.; included in Earth Physics Branch 1985 Open File No. 85-22 in edited form. The most recent earthquake reported in Newfoundland prior to 1929 was a magnitude 4 event on March 18, 1884, felt mainly on the northern Avalon Peninsula.

<sup>18</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 21, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 21, p. 6. Message by Burin telegraph operator Cox dated early on Thursday, November 21.

<sup>20</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 22, p. 6. The updated 10 p.m. November 21 message from Burin operator Cox, followed by the November 21, Lamaline message from E.C. Pittman [*sic* = Cyrus Clement Pitman, a Justice of the Peace] and John Foote, also a J.P. The same summary appeared in *The (St. John's) Free Press*, November 26, p. 1. Cox's 10 p.m. November 21 message appeared even earlier in *The Daily News*, November 22, p. 3, as did the message of Pitman and Foote.

<sup>21</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 23, p. 6. Late November 21 report by Inspector J.H. Dee, followed by Stipendiary Magistrate Malcolm Hollett's two messages of November 20 and 21 addressed to the Prime Minister. See also *Daily News*, November 23, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup>*Evening Telegram*, November 28, p. 6, prints H.M. Mosdell's report to the Hon. Dr. Arthur Barnes, Colonial Secretary, St. John's, from Argentinia as the *Meigle* landed on the morning of November 27. Mosdell's Argentinia report also appeared in *The Daily News*, November 28, p. 7. His report, which is not appended to the relief team's report to the Prime Minister on November 28, 1929, appears to have been provided directly to the press in Argentinia at 9:30 a.m., November 27, or at 1:00 p.m. that afternoon when the train from Argentinia reached St. John's.

<sup>23</sup>Lake, Hon. H.B.C[lyde], Hon. Dr. Alexander Campbell, M.H.A., Hon. Dr. H.M. Mosdell, M.H.A., and Mr. P.T. Fudge, M.H.A., in charge. 1929. *Voyage of Relief Ship Meigle, To Scene of Tidal Wave Disaster, Lamaline to Rock Harbour, Districts Burin East & West*. Report submitted to Prime Minister Sir Richard A. Squires, November 28, 11 pp., plus seven appended reports and letters of 13 pp., unnumbered. Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), MG 636, Box 1, Files 1 and 3. The four MHAs cited as the authors of the report are noted as "in charge" on p. 9. J.A. Winter, MHA for Burin East, who was also on board the *Meigle*, seems to have played a lesser role in the expedition. He authored no part of the above report and is noted in it only once as having left the vessel in Burin apparently in

the mid-afternoon of November 21 when it first arrived. Lake, MHA for Fortune on the north-western coast of the Burin Peninsula, always wrote his name as “H.B. Clyde Lake.”

<sup>24</sup>We thank Joan Ritcey, Head, Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John’s for turning up this information in *Who’s Who in and from Newfoundland 1930* (2nd ed., St. John’s, R. Hibbs). Neither Captain Dalton’s full name, nor his initials, were recorded in the November 28, 1929, report on the voyage of the *Meigle*. In *Tsunami: The Newfoundland Tidal Wave Disaster* (St. John’s: Flanker Press, 2004), Maura Hanrahan invented the name “Vince” for him. The Maritime History Archive of Memorial University found Captain Burgess’s first name in the signing-on sheets of the *Meigle*’s two voyages bracketing the November 21–27, 1929, relief mission to the Burin Peninsula.

<sup>25</sup>See n. 23.

<sup>26</sup>Hollett, Malcolm. 1929. *REPORT By Magistrate Malcolm Hollett On Damages by Tidal Wave, between Lamaline and Rock Hr.* In Lake et al., 1929, pp. [17]–[19]. A transcript of portions appears in Table 2.

<sup>27</sup>Dee, Inspector J.H. 1929. *Report. By Inspector J.H. Dee on Disaster of Night of 18th November, on the Coast from Lamaline to St. Lawrence, Inclusive.* In Lake et al., 1929, pp. [20]–[21]. A transcript of portions appears in Table 2.

<sup>28</sup>See n. 23.

<sup>29</sup>*List Of Lives Lost In Earthquake Disaster — Section from Rock Harbour to Lamaline. (covering entire area).* In Lake et al., 1929, pp. [13]–[14]. An exact transcript appears in Table 3.

<sup>30</sup>South Coast Disaster Committee. 1931. *Report of the South Coast Disaster Committee.* Chair R.F. Horwood, May 13 (St. John’s, Manning and Rabbits, July, 68 pp.). The “South Coast Disaster Committee,” chaired by Horwood, was separate from the “Earthquake Relief Committee” chaired by the Hon. H.B. Clyde Lake, M.H.A., which seemed to operate mainly in the urban area of St. John’s.

<sup>31</sup>A nurse recruited and supported by the Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association.

<sup>32</sup>Ruffman, Alan, in association with Clyde Cheeseman, Gordon Cheeseman and Wayne Hollett and with the assistance of Reginald E. Janes and Jessie Drover. 1989. *The November 18, 1929 Tsunami in the Community of Part au Bras, Burin Peninsula, Newfoundland* [Abstract]. Annual Conference, Canadian Nautical Research Society, June 22–24, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1 p.

<sup>33</sup>Ruffman, Alan. 1994. The 1929 Earthquake and the Search for John MacLeod. *Cape Breton’s Magazine*, Wreck Cove, Nova Scotia, No. 67, Fall, pp. [56]–[58]; Ruffman, Alan. 2001. Potential for large-scale submarine slope failure and tsunami generation along the U.S. mid-Atlantic coast: Comment. *Geology*, Vol. 29, October, p. 967.

<sup>34</sup>The authors could only find a grave marker for Mary Ann Walsh’s brother, installed less than a year before her own death in the tsunami: “Erected by Mary Ann Walsh In Loving Memory of her brother Thomas Walsh who died at Nants Cove Dec 17, 1928, aged 78 years.” Nants Cove is a small embayment about 1.5 km southwest from the head of Taylor’s Bay about halfway along the shore towards Point au Gaul; it is spelled as “Nantes Cove” on the modern topographic map. We suspect that Mary Ann Walsh was buried in close proximity to her brother but have been unable to prove it in the St. Joseph’s Catholic records.

<sup>35</sup>Even V.P. de Smitt (n. 5) in his detailed April 1932 analysis of the cable losses makes no mention of human losses. His only comments as found on his p. 15 contain errors and are somewhat exaggerated, as were many of the press reports of the day: "It reached the shore at the time of high water some two hours after the earthquake. Even under these conditions it was serious only at the heads of narrow bays with converging walls located along the coast of Newfoundland and at a few isolated places in Cape Breton. It was reported that in some of the narrow inlets the wave piled up to such heights (50 feet) as to submerge and sweep away fishing villages, in places carrying away the land on which they stood."

<sup>36</sup>Fruth, L.S. 1965. *The 1929 Grand Banks turbidite and sediments of the Sohm abyssal plain*. Unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 258 pp.; Mayer, L.A., A.N. Shor, J.E. Hughes Clarke and D.J.W. Piper. 1988. Dense Biological Communities at 3850 metres on the Laurentian Fan and their relationship to the deposit of the 1929 Grand Banks Earthquake. *Deep-Sea Research*; Normark, W.R., D.J.W. Piper and D.A.V. Stow. 1983. Quaternary development of channels, levees, and lobes on middle Laurentian Fan. *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*, Vol. 67, No. 9, pp. 1400-1409; Piper, David J.W. and William R. Normark. 1982. *Effects of the 1929 Grand Banks earthquake on the continental slope off eastern Canada*. In Current Research, Part B., Geological Survey of Canada, Paper 82-1B, pp. 147-151; Piper, D.J.W. and W.R. Normark. 1982. Acoustic interpretation of Quaternary sedimentation and erosion on the channelled upper Laurentian Fan, Atlantic margin of Canada. *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences*, Vol. 19, pp. 1974-1984; Piper, D.J.W., D.A.V. Stow and W.R. Normark. 1984. The Laurentian Fan: Sohm Abyssal Plain. *Geo-Marine Letters*, Vol. 3, Nos. 2-4, pp. 141-146; Piper, D.J.W., R. Sparkes, D.C. Mosher, A.N. Shor and J.A. Farre. 1984. *Seabed instability near the epicentre of the 1929 Grand Banks Earthquake*. Geological Survey of Canada, Open File Report 1131; Piper, D.J.W., A.N. Shor, J.A. Farre, S. O'Connell and R. Jacobi. 1985. Sediment slides and turbidity currents on the Laurentian Fan: Sidescan sonar investigations near the epicentre of the 1929 Grand Banks earthquake. *Geology*, Vol. 13, pp. 538-541; Piper, D.J.W., J.A. Farre and A.N. Shor. 1985. Late Quaternary slumps and debris flows on the Scotian Slope. *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, Vol. 96, pp. 1508-1517; Piper, D.J.W. and A.E. Aksu. 1987. The source and origin of the 1929 Grand Banks turbidity current inferred from sediment budgets. *Geo-Marine Letters*, Vol. 7, pp. 177-182; Piper, David J.W., Alexander N. Shor and John E. Hughes Clarke. 1988. The 1929 "Grand Banks" earthquake; slump and turbidity current. In H.E. Clifton, ed., *Sedimentological Consequences of Convulsive Geologic Events*. Geological Society of America, Special Paper, No. 229, pp. 77-92; Stow, D[orrik]. A.V. 1981. Laurentian Fan: morphology, sediments, processes and growth pattern. *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 375-393.

<sup>37</sup>Ruffman, Alan and Martitia Tuttle. 1994. Preliminary Results of a Search for an On-shore Record of the 1929 Grand Banks Tsunami [Abstract]. Atlantic Geoscience Society, Annual Meeting and Colloquium, February 4-5, Amherst, Nova Scotia, published in *Program with Abstracts* and in *Atlantic Geology*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 80-81; Ruffman, Alan and Martitia Tuttle. 1994. In Search of an On-land Record of the 1929 Grand Banks Tsunami [Abstract]. Geological Association of Canada, GAC-MAC Joint Annual Meeting, May 16-18, Waterloo, Ontario, Fluvial, Glacial and Marine Depositional Environments, published in *Program with Abstracts*, Vol. 19, p. A96; Ruffman, Alan, Martitia P. Tuttle and Thane W. Anderson. 1995. November 18, 1929 Tsunami-laid Sand and Pebble Deposits on

the Burin Peninsula, Newfoundland [Abstract]. Atlantic Geoscience Society, Annual Meeting and Colloquium, February 3-4, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, published in *Program with Abstracts* and in *Atlantic Geology*, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 58; Tuttle, Martitia P., Alan Ruffman, Thane Anderson and Hewitt Jeter. 2004. Distinguishing Tsunami from Storm Deposits in eastern North America: The 1929 Grand Banks Tsunami versus the 1991 Halloween Storm. *Seismological Research Letters*, Vol. 75, No. 1, January/February, cover photo, pp. 117-131. The last-mentioned journal featured a coloured cover showing the tsunami victim James Lockyer's gravestone in St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery on Allan's Island.

<sup>38</sup>Readers may see the onshore geological signature of the 1929 tsunami in Taylor's Bay by looking at the Dalhousie University Department of Earth Sciences website <<http://earthsciences.dal.ca/people/hap/ruffman/ruffman.html>>.

<sup>39</sup>Duley, Margaret [Iris]. 1941, reprinted 1977. *Highway of Valour*. Originally published by MacMillan Company, Toronto, Ontario and New York City, New York, 324 pp.; reprinted by Griffin Press Ltd., Toronto, Ontario, with added biographical note by Margot [I.] Duley Morrow (née Duley), October 11, 1976, 324 pp.

<sup>40</sup>Doxsee's 1948 report (n. 4) spends little time on the tsunami. "Sweeping in from the Atlantic ... taking a toll of twenty-seven lives and causing enormous loss of property" (p. 325). Then by depending on a 1929 newspaper summary, Doxsee misses noting that two lives were lost in Kelly's Cove, so his summary in fact falls short of his quoted "toll of twenty-seven lives" by two persons (p. 326).

<sup>41</sup>Jones, Gerald. 1975. The South Coast Disaster of 1929. *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 3, January, pp. 35-40.

<sup>42</sup>Ruffman, Alan. 1993. *Reconnaissance Search on the South Coast of the Burin Peninsula, Newfoundland, for tsunami-laid sediments deposited by the "tidal wave" following the November 18, 1929 Laurentian Slope Earthquake, August 17-September 2, 1993*. Geomarine Associates Ltd., Halifax, Nova Scotia, Project 90-19, Report for Seismology, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, Palisades, New York, Contract No. NRC-04-92-088, as part of the study "Paleoseismicity and Defining Earthquake Hazard in Eastern North America" for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C., September 26, 228 pp., revised May 8, 1994, 241 pp.

<sup>43</sup>Ruffman, Alan. 1996. *Tsunami Runup Mapping as an Emergency Preparedness Planning Tool: The 1929 tsunami in St. Lawrence, Newfoundland*. Geomarine Associates Ltd., Halifax, Nova Scotia, Project 94-14, Report for Emergency Preparedness Canada, Office of the Senior Scientific Advisor, Ottawa, Ontario, Contract No. 94-D025, revised November 7, Volume 1 — Report, 144 pp.; Volume 2 — Appendices and Enclosures, 281 pp.; mounted on website <[http://www.ocipep.gc.ca/research/resactivites/natHaz/en\\_tsunami/1994-D025\\_e.asp](http://www.ocipep.gc.ca/research/resactivites/natHaz/en_tsunami/1994-D025_e.asp)> for English.

<sup>44</sup>Cranford, Garry. 2000. *Tidal Wave: A List of Victims and Survivors — Newfoundland 1929*. Flanker Press, St. John's, 264 pp. This volume is a verbatim transcript of the South Coast Disaster Committee's statutory declaration forms, now found in 24 boxes at PANL. These forms were often filled out by a Committee member on behalf of the claimant as many of the claimants were illiterate. As a result, quite a few of the names recorded on these forms are not correct. The published verbatim transcript can only repeat the errors in the names. The only victims identified are those cited in the notes of the Committee, sometimes found at the end of each family's detailed tabulation of their loss claim on the statutory declaration form. Such notes as these on the tsunami victims in this volume are lost in the

massive transcription of the many loss claims; they are not gathered in one list and they are not indexed separately. Only about 24 references to separate tsunami victims can be found in the volume. Of these only about eight are given any sort of a name.

<sup>45</sup>See n. 24. This author has certainly developed some of her stories around the actual victims, but she does not provide a listing of the victims in one place. The volume is not indexed, so offers no easy way to locate the relevant stories if one seeks a full list of the 1929 tsunami victims.

<sup>46</sup>See n. 18.

<sup>47</sup>See n. 19.

<sup>48</sup>See n. 20.

<sup>49</sup>See n. 21.

<sup>50</sup>See n. 22.

<sup>51</sup>See n. 23 and 26.

<sup>52</sup>See n. 23 and 27.

<sup>53</sup>See n. 23 and 29.

<sup>54</sup>The baptisms of Richard Henry Dibben in 1869 and of Mary Ann Bennett in 1871 were performed by Rev'd William Rozier, that of Jessie Annah Fudge was by Rev'd A.S.H. Winsor, a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionary in 1883, that of Harriett Mary Fudge was by Rev'd A.T. Tulk in 1920, and that of her sister Anna Eliza Dibbon Fudge was performed by Rev'd (later Bishop) John Alfred Meaden in 1923. In Oderin the Anglican services were held in John D. Bailey's house; on holy days the Anglicans used the Sacred Heart Catholic Chapel. Rev'd A.S.H. Winsor's full name is found in the Aquaforte, Newfoundland, Birth Registry as Alfred Samuel Hill Winsor.

<sup>55</sup>When George Dibbin married Anna Eliza on December 16, 1874, he signed with his own hand and signed his name as "Dibbin" rather than using the "X" of an illiterate as was common in the marriage register at the time. However, when their daughter, Jessie Annah, was baptized and entered into the baptismal register on October 18, 1883, Rev'd Winsor entered her name as "Dibbon." We therefore use the spelling "Dibbin" for the parents and "Dibbon" for the tsunami victim Jessie Annah Fudge (née Dibbon).

On the other hand, the siblings Richard Henry and Mary Ann Dibben were clearly noted in the baptismal register as "Dibben," while he was noted in the burial register as "Dibbin" by Rev'd E.P. Hiscock (though his body was never found). Therefore we use the spelling Dibben for these two tsunami victims. Anna Eliza Dibbon Fudge was baptized as "Dibbon."

<sup>56</sup>Louisa Allen poses a real puzzle as to her origins. We do know that she was previously married to a John Brushett of Step-a-side, who was probably a Methodist. The PANL Burin Methodist/United Church records show that John Brushett of Step-a-side died on May 28, 1905, at age 49. On March 30, 1909, Louisa Brushett married William Allen, age 59, of Port au Bras (Entry No. 875); he was actually age 60.5 by then. There is a May 12, 1880, record of a William Allen of Burin marrying Hannah Saunders in Port au Bras (Entry No. 470); thus William Allen too may have been widowed by 1909. The 1921 nominal census gives William Allan of Port au Bras as born in October 1848 and Louisa Allan as born in August 1847. The burial records of the Anglican Church in Burin spell Louisa's name Allan in 1929 and likewise on February 20, 1937, when William Allan, then of Step-a-side, Burin, was buried at age 89 (actually 88.4). William Allen's loss claim made shortly after the 1929 disaster indicated he was 81; it was filled out by another person and his name is written as Allen.



Louisa's granddaughter Mrs. Elizabeth Clarke (née Brushett) of Port au Bras, who still wears Mrs. Allen's wedding ring from John Brushett, spells her grandmother's name Allen. We have used the spelling "Allen."

<sup>57</sup>The Bonnell gravestone in the Lamaline Anglican cemetery lists the mother, Bridget Susannah Bonnell, correctly but it has her daughter with an incorrect age: "Amelia Alice Mar. 8, 1933 aged 8 months." The siblings, Alice and Cyrus, had been found alive after the tsunami "near the chimney which had foundered" and were all covered in debris. The surviving children of Robert and Bridget Bonnell were scattered among relatives after the tsunami; Alice with her maternal grandmother, Gilbert with a maternal aunt, and Cyrus with his paternal grandmother. The second author of this article, Violet Hann (née Hillier), is the grand-niece of the brothers Bertram (November 4, 1902-January 15, 1979) and Robert (February 18, 1895-July 29, 1965) Bonnell and of their sisters Martha Hillier (née Bonnell; January 19, 1897-September 23, 1979) and Dinah Ford (née Bonnell; November 3, 1912- ).



*Thomas Hillier died on his 44th birthday trying to secure his boat pulled up on the beach in Point au Gaul. (Ruffman collection.)*

**Table 1. Record of the Death Toll As First Reported in the St. John's, Newfoundland, Newspapers**

**a) When the first messages got out – November 21<sup>46,47</sup> (with additional or expanded data from the Pitman and Foote message in brackets)<sup>48</sup>**

Port au Bras	Mrs. Thos. Fudge and three children Mrs. Capt. Sam. Bennett and her brother Henry Dibbon Mrs. William Allan
Kelly's Cove	Mrs. Vincent Kelly and her daughter
Lord's Cove	Mrs. P. Rennie and three children (Mrs. Patrick)
Taylor's Bay	Mrs. Robert Bonnell (and her children) Bartholomew Bonnell and two children (two children of Bertram Bonnell) (a child of George Piercey)
Point au Gaul	T.J. Hipditch, Thomas Hipditch (Thomas G.) H.P. Hipditch and E.H. Hipditch Thomas Hillier Irene Hillier (Mrs. Henry Hillier) Mrs. Eliza Walsh, Miss M.A. Walsh (Mary Anne)
Lamaline (Allan's Is.)	Thomas Lockyer (James Lockyer)

[Total Fatalities – at least 28 persons]

**b) When the Burin deputation to St. John's arrived – November 22<sup>49</sup> (with additional data from M. Hollett in brackets)**

Port au Bras	Mrs. Jessie Fudge and three daughters viz: Gertrude, aged 15 years; Hannah M., aged 11 years; Harriett, aged 9 years (Harriett Mary (10)) Mrs. Mary Bennett, aged 55 years Mrs. Wm. Bennett, aged 55 years Mrs. Wm. Allen, aged 84 years Henry Dibbon, of John, aged 50 years
Kelly's Cove	Mrs. Vincent Kelly and her daughter, aged 14 years
Lord's Cove	Mrs. Patrick Rennie and 3 children (6 at Lord's Cove)
Taylor's Bay	Mrs. Robert Bonnell and child Bartholomew Bonnell and two children
Point au Gaul	T.J. Hipditch, married Thomas Hipditch, aged 5 years; H.P. Hibditch, aged 3 years; E.H. Hibditch, aged 8 months T. Hillier, married (Oil Inspector)

	Irence Hillier, age not ascertained
	Mrs. Eliza Walsh
	Miss M.A. Walsh, spinster
Lamaline	Thomas Lockyer, Allans Island died of injuries received

[Total Fatalities – 28 persons; perhaps 30 if Hollett is suggesting six died at Lord's Cove]

c) **When the *MEIGLE* returned to Argentina – November 27** as a report from Hon. Dr. Harris Munden Mosdell, Chairman of the Board of Health.<sup>50</sup>

Port au Bras	Jessie Fudge and her three daughters, Gertle [ <i>sic</i> ], Harriet [ <i>sic</i> ] and Hannah Mary Bennett Henry Dibbon Mrs. William Allan, seven in all.
Kelly's Cove	Mrs. Vincent Kelly and her daughter, Dorothy, two in all.
Patrick's Cove* [Lord's Cove]	Mrs. Patrick Rennie and her three children, four in all.
Taylor's Bay	Mrs. Robert Bonnell and children two children of Bartholomew Bonnell infant child of George Piercey, five in all.
Point aux [ <i>sic</i> ] Gaul**	Mrs. Henry Hillier, the three children of David Hipditch, namely, Thomas, E.H. and H.P. Thomas Hillier one of the government Oil Inspectors Irene Hillier, Mrs. Eliza Walsh, and Miss Mary Ann Walsh, [eight in all].
Allen's Island Lamaline	James Lockyer

[Total Fatalities – 27 persons; possibly 28 if Mosdell is implying more than one child of Mrs. Robert Bonnell died]

\*"Patrick's" Cove only ever appears in Dr. H.M. Mosdell's report to the Colonial Secretary, Hon. Dr. Arthur Barnes; it is Lord's Cove.

\*\*The name "Point au Gaul" is fairly recent. It was often spelled as "Point aux Gaul" up until the mid-1960s when seemingly some unknown government official deemed it necessary to correct the French grammar and to delete the silent "x" of "aux" in many outports with similar names including Point aux Gaul. It shows as "Point au Gaul" on modern topographic maps.

**Table 2. Death Toll as reported in Transcripts of Excerpts of the Reports of Malcolm Hollett, Stipendiary Magistrate, Burin, and of J.H. Dee, Inspector of Revenue Service, who were on board the SS *Daisy* sent to Lamaline, November 20 and to St. Lawrence, then Point au Gaul, on the morning of November 21**

*From: REPORT By Magistrate Malcolm Hollett On Damages by Tidal Wave, between Lamaline and Rock Hr.*<sup>51</sup>

[PORT AU BRAS]	LIVES LOST AT PORT AU BRAS
	Jessie Fudge, 47, and her three daughters; – Gertie, 15; Harriet May, 11; Hannah Elisa, 9. Mary Ann Bennett, 58. Henry Dibbon, 61. Mrs. William Allen, 84.
KELLY'S COVE	LIVES LOST; – Mrs. Vincent Kelly and daughter Dorothy Kelly

*From: REPORT By Inspector J.H. Dee on Disaster of Night of 18th November, on the Coast from Lamaline to St. Lawrence, Inclusive.*<sup>52</sup>

Lord's Cove.	... Four lives lost, viz: Mrs. P. Rennie and three children.
Taylor's Bay.	Four lives were lost, viz: Mrs. Robert Bonnell and child. Bartholomew Bonnell and two children.
Point au Gaul.	... with eight lives lost, viz: T.J. Hipditch, Married. Thomas Hipditch, aged 5. H.P. Hipditch, aged 3. E.H. Hipditch, 8 months. T.G. Hillier, married, oil inspector. Irene Hillier. Mrs. Eliza Walsh. Miss M.A. Walsh.
Lamaline	One man, Thomas Lockyer, of Allen's Island died of injuries received.

[Order reversed from Dee's original report]

[Total Fatalities – 26 persons, or more likely 27]



*James Lockyer headstone in St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery on Allan's Island. (Ruffman collection.)*



**Table 3. The Nominal “Official” List of Those Lost: Transcript of the Death List from the Report Prepared on the Voyage of the Relief Ship *Meigle***

LIST OF LIVES LOST IN EARTHQUAKE DISASTER<sup>53</sup>

-----  
Section from Rock Harbour to Lamaline.  
(covering entire area).  
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TOTAL FATALITIES – 27.

Nov. 18, 1929

Port au Bras:     Jessie Fudge, 47  
                         Gertie Fudge, 15    )  
                         Harriet May, 11    ) Three Daughters of Jessie Fudge  
                         Hannah Eliza, 9    )  
                         Mary Ann Bennett, 58  
                         Henry Dibbin, 61  
                         Mrs. Wm. Allan, 84

Kelly’s Cove:     Mrs. Vincent Kelly  
                         Dorothy Kelly, her daughter

Lord’s Cove:       Mrs. Patrick Rennie, 37  
                         Rita Rennie, 9        )  
                         Patrick Rennie, 7    ) Children of Mrs. P. Rennie  
                         Bernard Rennie, 2    )

Taylor’s Bay:       Mrs. Robert Bonnell and child  
                         Two children of Bartholomew Bonnell  
                         George Piercey’s infant child, from exposure.

Point au Gaul:     Mrs. Henry Hillier, 60  
                         Thomas Hipditch, 5    child of David Hipditch  
                         H.P. Hipditch, 3        "    "    "        "  
                         E.H. Hipditch, 8 mos.    "    "    "        "  
                         Thos. G. Hillier, 50  
                         Irene Hillier, 15, daughter of Joshua Hillier  
                         Mrs. Eliza Walsh, 60.  
                         Miss Mary Ann Walsh, 85.

Allen’s Island:     James Lockyer, 80, died of shock shortly after the disaster.

RECAPITULATION OF DEATHS:

Port au Bras.....	7
Kelly's Cove.....	2
Lord's Cove.....	4
Taylor's Bay.....	5
Point au Gaul.....	8
Allen's Island, Lamaline.....	1 – 27

Source: Two-page document dated November 28, 1929; Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador; South Coast Disaster Records, MG 636, Box 1, Files 1 and 3.

NOTE: Allan's Island was often spelled as "Allen's Island" in the 1929 newspaper reports and was also spelled as "Allen's" in Lake et al.'s final report to Prime Minister Squires dated November 28, 1929 (as found above). We have accepted the current spelling of "Allan's" Island on modern maps for use in the text of this paper as opposed to "Allen's" used on occasion in 1929. However, in Tables 1, 2, and 3 we have reproduced the spellings used in the 1929 sources not only for Allen's Island but also for several of the names of victims of the tsunami e.g., "Dibbon" where our final Summary Table 10 uses "Dibben" and "Hepditch" which is used consistently in 1929 but which appears as Hepditch in the final Table 10. In the latter case Reta Annie Kearley of Fortune on the Burin Peninsula, as a living sibling of the three Hepditch victims lost in Point au Gaul, knew that the spelling used by her family for all her life was "Hepditch" and took pains to ensure that the authors got it correct.

**Table 4. List of the Seven Lives Lost at Port au Bras, November 18, 1929, Tsunami**

Full Name (Maiden Name) (Spouse/Relationship)	Dates of Birth and Baptism (Place) (Church) <sup>54</sup>	Age on November 18, 1929	Body Recovered?*
Mary Ann (Minie Sam) Bennett (née Dibben) (widow of Capt. Samuel Bennett; sister of Richard Henry Dibben <sup>55</sup> (of John); first cousin of Frances Elizabeth Kelly lost in Kelly's Cove)	July 25, 1871 (Port au Bras) October 1, 1871 (St. Andrew's, Port au Bras)	58.3 years	Yes Under government wharf, November 20, 1929
Louisa ?? Allen <sup>56</sup> (née Traverse) (widow of John Brushett who died May 28, 1905; wife of William (Uncle Billy) Allen, in 1929; age 81)	August ?? 1847 or 1845? (Oderin, Oderin Island)	c. 82.3 years	Yes Under Tommy Clarke's wharf, November 20, 1929
Richard Henry Dibben (of John) (son of John and Eliza Dibben; brother of Mrs. Mary Ann Bennett and brother of George, Jessie's father)	May 12, 1869 (Port au Bras) May 14, 1869 (St. Andrew's, Port au Bras)	60.5 years	No

Jessie Annah Fudge (née Dibbon) (wife of Thomas ?? Fudge, age 53; daughter of George and Ann Eliza Dibbin; niece of R.H. Dibben and M.A. Bennett)	October 8, 1883 (Port au Bras) October 18, 1883, (St. Andrew's, Port au Bras)	46.1 years	Yes At Path End, picked up by Thomas Shave's wharf on November 20, 1929
Gertrude (Gertie) ?? Fudge (daughter of Thomas and Jessie Fudge)	August ??, 1914 (Port au Bras?) ?? (not found)	c. 15.3 years	Yes Found in the outer harbour Spring, 1930
Harriett Mary Fudge (daughter of Thomas and Jessie Fudge)	March 12, 1920 (Port au Bras) March 28, 1920 (St. Andrew's, Port au Bras)	9.7 years	Yes At Path End, picked up by Thomas Shave's wharf on November 20, 1929
Anna (Hannah) Eliza Dibbon Fudge (daughter of Thomas and Jessie Fudge)	September 19, 1922 (Port au Bras) March 18, 1923 (St. Andrew's, Port au Bras)	7.2 years	No

NOTE: The house seen with the light (lamp) in the window as it was swept out to sea contained Mrs. Jessie Fudge and her three children, Gertrude (Gertie), Harriett, and Anna (Hannah). Jessie's and Harriett's bodies were found near Thomas Shave's wharf at Path End fetched up on a foundation; one of the other two children was found by Tommy Clarke and George Hines who saw something in shallow water of the outer harbour of Port au Bras in the Spring (May?) of 1930 and, bringing it off the bottom with a cod jigger, found that it was a tangle of tarred fishing twine which held the partly preserved body of Gertrude Fudge.

\*The four bodies which were recovered on November 20 were buried in St. Andrew's Anglican Cemetery, Port au Bras, on November 21, 1929. That of Gertrude Fudge was buried in 1930; her birth, baptism, and burial records have not been found. Mary Ann Bennett's gravestone is mismarked November 19, 1929.

Table 5. List of the Two Lives Lost at Kelly's Cove on Burin Island, November 18, 1929, Tsunami

Full Name (Maiden Name) (Spouse/Relationship)	Dates of Birth and Baptism (Place) (Church)	Age on November 18, 1929	Body Recovered? Place Date
Frances (Fannie) Elizabeth Kelly (née Mitchell) (first cousin of Mary Ann Bennett lost in Port au Bras) (wife of Vincent Joseph Kelly, age 45)	August 11, 1887 (Port au Bras) ?? (St. Andrew's, Port au Bras)	42.2 years	No
Dorothy Jane Kelly (middle daughter of Vincent and Frances Kelly)	December 2, 1919 (Kelly's Cove, Burin Island) March 16, 1920 (Rev'd John T. Newman, Zion United Church, Collins Cove, Burin)	10.0 years	No

NOTE: Vincent Joseph Kelly was born into a Catholic family in Step-a-side (Kelly's Cove on Burin Island) of John Kelly and Isabella Kelly (née Marshall) in late 1883 or early January 1884. The St. Patrick's Parish baptism registry for 1833-1894 shows him baptized on January 19, 1884. His parents died when he was very young and he was raised by the Wagg family in Kelly's Cove (Susan Wagg); the Wagg's were members of the Methodist Church. Mrs. Joseph Kelly was born Frances Elizabeth Mitchell into an Anglican family from Port au Bras. Some time prior to 1914 Frances Mitchell married a Mr. ?? Kears (or Keynes). Mr. Kears drowned some time prior to 1914 and there were no children. On January 20, 1914, Vincent Kelly and Frances (Fannie) Kears were married at the Zion Methodist Church, Collins Cove, Burin. Vincent J. Kelly died at age 74 on February 21, 1958, and was buried two days later at Collins Cove. The two-storey, seven-room Kelly house was located on the very northwest end of Burin Island. It is believed that the floating house with Frances and Dorothy Kelly still inside passed out through Bull Gut between Burin Island and Pardy Island, and that it broke up on the shoals in Placentia Bay to the east of Burin Island. The two bodies were never found. Vincent Kelly had three surviving children, Marian, age 15, Curtis, 12, and Roy, 4.



**Table 6. List of the Four Lives Lost at Lord's Cove, November 18, 1929, Tsunami**

Full Name (Maiden Name) (Spouse/Relationship)	Dates of Birth and Baptism (Place) (Church)	Age on November 18, 1929	Body Recovered?*
Sarah Ann Rennie (née Fitzpatrick) (wife of Patrick (Paddy) Joseph Rennie, age 38; daughter of Martin Fitzpatrick and Mary Jane Fitzpatrick (née Bonnell))	August 3, 1892 (Lord's Cove) September 19, 1892 (not recorded; Fr. J. Whalen; probably St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Allan's Island)	37.3 years	Yes Eastern Cove Pond in house kitchen November 18, 1929
Rita Margaret Rennie (daughter of Patrick and Sarah)	August 26, 1920 (Lord's Cove) September 22, 1920 (St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Allan's Island)	9.2 years	Yes Eastern Cove Pond in house kitchen November 18, 1929
Patrick Bernard Rennie (son of Patrick and Sarah)	September 25, 1922 (Lord's Cove) September 30, 1920 (St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Allan's Island)	7.1 years	Yes Eastern Cove Pond in house kitchen November 18, 1929

Bernard Patrick Rennie (son of Patrick and Sarah)	February ??, 1928 (Lord's Cove) ?? (not found)	c. 1.8 years	Yes Eastern Cove Pond in house kitchen November 18, 1929
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NOTE: Sarah Ann Rennie, her infant son, and two older children drowned downstairs in their house. Rennie told his surviving daughter Margaret Mary that Bernard was in a high chair at the time of the tsunami. Margaret Mary Rennie (born August 20, 1926, and baptized September 5, 1926) was rescued later on the night of November 18, 1929, in her disrupted bed on the second floor of the Rennie home. David Fitzpatrick, William Lambe, and John Joe Fitzpatrick came out in a dory and broke in an upper window. After the tsunami Margaret Rennie was sent to live with her mother's sister, Aunt Minnie Jackman (née Fitzpatrick) in Roundabout near St. Lawrence. Patrick Rennie and his three surviving children (Albert, age 14 at the time of the tsunami, Martin Joseph, 11, and Margaret, 3.3) moved in 1931 to Little St. Lawrence. He went to work in the infamous fluorspar mine at St. Lawrence. Margaret Rennie married George Benedict Saint from Little St. Lawrence on February 18, 1945, and presently lives in Fox Cove near Burin. The graves of the Rennie family members lost in the 1929 tsunami were unidentified for many years. During the Lord's Cove 1992 Come Home Year an 84-year-old senior citizen, Aunt Sis Hodge, showed Margaret Mary Rennie and her daughter Margaret where the graves were located; they are now marked with a simple wooden cross and plaque, and three smaller crosses for the children.

\*The bodies were removed from the first floor of the house, and were interred at St. Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Lord's Cove, on November 20, 1929, by Father William Sullivan of St. Joseph's.

**Table 7. List of the Five (in fact Six) Lives Lost at Taylor's Bay, November 18, 1929, Tsunami**

Full Name (Maiden Name) (Spouse/Relationship)	Dates of Birth and Baptism (Place) (Church)	Age on November 18, 1929	Body Recovered?*
Bridget Susannah Bonnell <sup>57</sup> (née Hillier) (daughter of Reuben Hillier and Mary Josephine Hillier; née Rae) (wife of Robert (Rob) Bonnell, age 35)	July 11, 1904 (Taylor's Bay) July 27, 1904 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	25.3 years	Yes behind the beach on Taylor's Bay Pond c. December 1, 1929
Mary Gertrude Bonnell (daughter of Robert and Bridget)	October 1, 1928 (Taylor's Bay) November 9, 1928 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	1.1 year	Yes behind the beach on Taylor's Bay Pond c. December 1, 1929
Amelia Alice Bonnell (daughter of Robert and Bridget)	c. May ??, 1925 (Taylor's Bay) ?? (not found)	c. 4.5 years (died on March 8, 1933 at age c. 7.8 years)	n/a
John Lewis Bonnell (son of Bertram Bonnell, age 27, and Elizabeth Bonnell (née Piercey))	October 10, 1926 (Taylor's Bay) November 14, 1926 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	3.1 years	No

Clayton Bertram Bonnell (son of Bertram and Elizabeth Bonnell)	April 6, 1929 (Taylor's Bay) May 5, 1929 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	7.4 months	Yes Place and Date not known
William Cyril Piercey (son of George and Jessie Maud Piercey (née Bonnell); daughter of Jacob Bonnell and Julia King)	October 18, 1929 (Taylor's Bay) November 7, 1929 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	1 month (died of exposure on November 20, 1929)	Yes Taylor's Bay in Jacob Bonnell house November 18, 1929

NOTE: The mother of Bridget Suzannah Bonnell (née Rae) is listed in the marriage records of the St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church by the Anglican clergyman as née "LuRee." We have chosen to use "Rae" as found throughout the Catholic records of the area for the Rae family. The body of Bridget Susannah Bonnell is believed to have been trapped and frozen into the pond behind the beach bar at Taylor's Bay. It was found circa December 1, 1929, after a thaw, with ice still in the hair. The infant, William Cyril Piercey, was found on the floor of the kitchen of Jacob Bonnell's house after it floated off and became entangled in the telegraph wire that ran along the coastal road. The infant was found among the turnips of an overturned barrel. Bertram Bonnell was carrying John and Clayton under his arms when he fell and lost both in the tsunami; Mary Bonnell was in her mother's arms when they were both swept away. Bertram was greatly affected by the tsunami and the loss of his two sons for the rest of his life. There was also a considerable loss of livestock in the Taylor's Bay area. Amelia Alice Bonnell died in March 1933. It seems probable that her death was caused by the tsunami (see article text).

\*The recovered bodies were buried in St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Cemetery, Lamaline, on November 21 (Clayton Bonnell and William Piercey) and December 2 (Bridget Bonnell), 1929; all Anglican burials were by Rev'd S.G. Spurrell in 1929. Amelia Bonnell was buried on March 9, 1933, by Rev'd Frank H. Ross.

**Table 8. List of the Eight Lives Lost at Point au Gaul, November 18, 1929, Tsunami**

Full Name (Maiden Name) (Spouse/Relationship)	Dates of Birth and Baptism (Place) (Church)	Age on November 18, 1929	Body Recovered* Place Date
Mary Elizabeth (Eliza) ?? Walsh (née Rae) (widow of John ? Walsh; daughter of John Rae and Ann Rae (née Shea); sister-in-law to Mary Ann Walsh)	May 31, 1870 (Point au Gaul) (not recorded; Fr. John Edward Kinsella; probably St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Allan's Island)	59.5 years	Yes Barred Island off Point au Gaul by her son Basil and two others November 21, 1929
Mary Ann Walsh (sister of Patrick, John and Thomas ("Sick Tom") Walsh)	January ??, 1849 (Nance Cove) ?? (not found)	c. 80.8 years	Yes On the beach of Point au Gaul by Leo Robert Hillier November 19, 1929
Thomas George Hillier (husband of Lydia ?? Wooden; son of Isaac and Elizabeth Charlotte Hillier (née Hepditch))	November 21, 1885 (Point au Gaul) December 1, 1885 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	44.0 years	Yes Place not known probably November 19?, 1929
Elizabeth Ann Hillier (née King) (wife of Henry ?? Hillier, age 68.5; daughter of Thomas and Ann King (née Farr))	February 5, 1864 (Muddy Hole, Lamaline) February 28, 1864 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	65.7 years	Yes Place not known probably night of November 18-19?, 1929

Verena (Reenie) Deborah Hillier (daughter of Joshua ?? and Jemima ?? Hillier (née Hillier); niece of Jessie Hepditch; granddaughter of Elizabeth Ann Hillier)	February 18, 1919 (Point au Gaul) March 22, 1919 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	10.7 years	Yes On the shoreline by her father November 26?, 1929
Thomas George Hepditch (son of David Hepditch and Jessie Hepditch (née Hillier); grandson of Elizabeth Ann Hillier)	November 24, 1924 (English Harbour West) December 7, 1924 (St. Thomas' Anglican Church, English Harbour West, Rev. H. MacKay)	5.0 years	Yes Place not known probably night of November 18-19?, 1929
Henry Percival Hepditch (son of David and Jessie Hepditch; grandson of Elizabeth Ann Hillier)	November 29, 1926 (Point au Gaul) November [sic] 12, 1926 = Sunday Dec. 12, 1926 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	3.0 years	Yes in a dory November 19, 1929
Elizabeth (Betty) Esther Hepditch (daughter of David and Jessie Hepditch; niece of Jemima Hillier, granddaughter of Elizabeth Ann Hillier)	March 14, 1929 (Point au Gaul) March 20, 1929 (St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Lamaline)	8.1 months	Yes Place not known probably night of November 18-19?, 1929

NOTE: In April 2005 Reta Annie Kearley of Fortune, on the Burin Peninsula, a sibling of the tsunami victims Thomas George, Henry Percival, and Elizabeth Esther, recalled her parents referring to the lost children as "Thomas, Henry and Betty" respectively. She also recalled hearing that Mary Ann Walsh was found still with the sock in which she kept her money. Three bodies were found on the night of November 18-19, 1929, three found on November 19, 1929, and one later. The last body, that of Verena Deborah Hillier, was



found by her father Joshua on the shoreline on November 26?, 1929, per the folksong “Tidal Wave Disaster.” Thomas George Hillier, a government fish oil inspector, was playing cards at Abe Hillier’s on the evening of November 18, 1929. He tried to save his boat during the tsunami and was swept away. Henry Percival Hepditch was found in a small boat gripping the gunwale in death, having died of exposure; he apparently was not wet at all. Sheila Walsh, the great-grandniece of Mary Elizabeth Walsh, recalled that this victim was known as Elizabeth, or Eliza, not Mary (conversation June 16, 2005).

\*Mary Ann Walsh was buried in St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Cemetery, Allan’s Island on November 21, and Mary Elizabeth Walsh on November 22 probably by Father William Sullivan. The other victims were buried in St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Cemetery, Lamaline, by Rev’d S.G. Spurell, on November 20, with the exception of Thomas Hillier (November 21) and Verena Hillier (November 26).

**Table 9. List of the One Life Lost at Allan’s Island in the Lamaline Area, November 18, 1929, Tsunami**

Full Name (Maiden Name) (Spouse/Relationship)	Date of Birth and Baptism (Place) (Church)	Age on November 18, 1929	Body Recovered*	
			Place	Date
James ?? Lockyer (husband of Monica Frances Lockyer (née Fitzpatrick), age 75)	August ??, 1847 (Lamaline) ?? (not found)	c. 82.3 years	Yes Allan’s Island	November 18, 1929

NOTE: James Lockyer was outside and was crushed between a floating fish store and the barn. He died of his injuries and shock shortly afterwards.

\*James Lockyer was buried in St. Joseph’s Catholic Cemetery on Allan’s Island on November 21, 1929, by Father William Sullivan.

**Table 10. Final Summary List of Those Lost in the November 18, 1929, Tsunami**

Port au Bras	Mary Ann Bennett ( <u>Minie Sam</u> Bennett; née Dibben), 58.3 years <u>Louisa</u> ?? Allen (née Traverse), c. 82.3 years Richard <u>Henry</u> Dibben (of John), 60.5 years <u>Jessie Annah</u> Fudge (née Dibben), 46.1 years Gertrude ?? Fudge ( <u>Gertie</u> ), c. 15.3 years <u>Harriett</u> Mary Fudge, 9.7 years Anna Eliza Dibbon Fudge ( <u>Hannah</u> ), 7.2 years
Kelly's Cove	Frances Elizabeth Kelly ( <u>Fannie</u> ; née Mitchell), 42.2 years <u>Dorothy</u> Jane Kelly, 10.0 years
Lord's Cove	<u>Sarah</u> Ann Rennie (née Fitzpatrick), 37.3 years <u>Rita</u> Margaret Rennie, 9.2 years <u>Patrick</u> Bernard Rennie, 7.1 years <u>Bernard</u> Patrick Rennie, c. 1.8 years
Taylor's Bay	<u>Bridget</u> Susannah Bonnell (née Hillier), 25.3 years <u>Mary</u> Gertrude Bonnell, 1.1 years Amelia <u>Alice</u> Bonnell, c. 4.5 years, died c. 7.8 years <u>John</u> Lewis Bonnell, 3.1 years <u>Clayton</u> Bertram Bonnell, 7.4 months William Cyril Piercey, 1 month
Point au Gaul	Mary Elizabeth Walsh ( <u>Eliza</u> ; née Rae), 59.5 years <u>Mary Ann</u> Walsh, c. 80.8 years <u>Thomas</u> George Hillier, 44.0 years <u>Elizabeth</u> Ann Hillier (née King), 65.7 years Verena Deborah Hillier ( <u>Reenie</u> ), 10.7 years <u>Thomas</u> George Hepditch, 5.0 years <u>Henry</u> Percival Hepditch, 3.0 years Elizabeth Esther Hepditch ( <u>Betty</u> ), 8.1 months
Allan's Island	<u>James</u> ?? Lockyer, c. 82.3 years

Where it is known the commonly used first, or familiar, name is underlined. We have not been able to ascertain this name for the one-month-old infant boy from Taylor's Bay.



*Sarah Rennie's and her three children Rita, Patrick and Bernard's simple gravemarkers in St. Elizabeth's Catholic Cemetery overlooking Lord's Cove. Margaret was placed with relatives after the tsunami and did not know where her mother's grave was until the Lord's Cove Homecoming celebration in 1992 when "Aunt Sis" Hodge, an elder of the community, took her to the grave. (Ruffman collection.)*