

The Saga of Moses Drover

Entrepreneur of the 'Bay Metropolis'



Moses Drover was born in Upper Island Cove in 1845 and died in St. John's in 1918. This document chronicles his entrepreneurial successes and the heartbreaks he experienced along the way.

Moses built a total of four sawmills, three in the outports and a 'finishing mill' in St. John's. Besides his main activity as a lumber merchant, he became a local fish merchant who retailed fishing supplies and foodstuffs in return for dry salt codfish, salmon, and cod liver oil. He also ventured heavily into shipbuilding and the Labrador fishery.

Never one to accept defeat, this document highlights the ability of Moses Drover to face diversity head on and come out the other end successfully.

This document includes historical details about some of his descendants.

Gordon Rowe

Robert Burgess

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Moses Drover

Early Years in Conception Bay

Moses Drover (1845-1918) was born in Upper Island Cove, Conception Bay which is located off Route 70, the Conception Bay Highway, between the towns of Harbour Grace and Spaniard's Bay. It is a unique town both in its physical location and its culture. The town was once known as - The Walled City - because it is built at the bottom of high cliffs. In the Berry Census of 1675, the population was fourteen and was settled by fishermen from England and Ireland.

Moses' ancestors were Thomas Drover and Mary Toll of Ringwood, Hampshire, England, a town famous for its blacksmiths and tinsmiths, even today. Their sons William and Joseph Drover were the first Drovers to immigrate to Upper Island Cove in the mid 1700s. Ringwood Crescent is a street in Upper Island Cove named after the early Drover settlers.

Not a lot was written about Moses' early years, but according to Church records, he was one of seven children all born in Upper Island Cove to Aaron Drover (1805-1893) and Mary Ann Jones. The 1870 McAlpine Directory notes Aaron's occupation as a mechanic, which is unique given that most residents at that time were fishing families. According to local historian Randell Mercer, Aaron was also a skilled carpenter and was in his 80s when he laid the first board for the new Anglican church built in the early 1890s in Upper Island Cove. Based upon his future business endeavours, Moses also became a 'trades' person, skilled in carpentry and capable as a blacksmith.

Moses' first wife was Julia Ann Osbourne of Upper Island Cove. They married in 1864 and later moved to Harbour Grace. Baptisms for their children are found in the Anglican Church records of Harbour Grace. Some died in childhood while those that made it through to adulthood included Leander, Elfrida, Thomas, Isabella, Mary, Bertram, and William. In January 1886, Julia passed away at the early age of 42. Her headstone is in Saint Paul's Anglican cemetery at Harbour Grace.

By the mid-1880s, Moses had become a master carpenter with a thriving business in Harbour Grace. John Sharpe's Directory 1885 lists him as a carpenter with a business located on Harvey Street. An 1888 news article in the Harbour Grace Standard reports on a fire at his property in which he lost "many newly constructed window sashes".

At that time, Moses owned one schooner the *William* used for mercantile trading. He likely used the schooner to deliver products like window sashes in batches and traded common goods to sawmillers in exchange for lumber to supply his carpentry shop.

Whiteway Premises

Whiteway (formerly Witless Bay until August 13, 1912) in Trinity Bay south was not a sheltered harbour but rather a 'bay within a bay', exposed to the vagaries of wind and wave, along with a rocky bottom that was not the best anchorage for sailing ships. The Shag Rock, a grand triple horned shape, rising approximately 50 feet above water sits in the middle of the bay. The Shag Rock was named by English sailors who spotted 'Shags' a species of the large black diving bird cormorant, nesting on the cliffs of the rock. The Shag Rock was always noted as a danger to avoid in the Mariner's notices along with Black Point rock, a shoal that lies just below the surface in the bay. Although not named, both Rocks are clearly 'drawn in' on Richard Bonnycastle's 1842 map of Newfoundland. This was one reason, in the days of sailing ships, Whiteway was the last place along the south side of Trinity Bay to be settled permanently. The hearty families who first established roots in Whiteway came to fish for cod and salmon as well as bait fish such as herring and squid.



Figure 1: Shag Rock

Whiteway was mentioned in Trinity merchant Benjamin Lester's diary in 1767 and first appears on a 1775 map by Michael Lane. It was not settled permanently until the arrival of Charles and Sarah Burgess in 1862. Whiteway Brook, which empties into the west end of the bay, starts at the watershed divide between Trinity and Conception bays. A topographic map illustrates the rolling hillsides that follow this watershed to the ocean, producing a dense mixed forest of fir,



Figure 2: Whiteway Watershed

spruce, tamarack (locally called juniper), and some birch. This resource led Jimmy Rowe of Heart's Content to establish a ship building dock at Whiteway, where 13 brigantines and schooners were launched between 1824 and 1842. The last pond in the watershed is named after Jimmy Rowe, and today many hikers walk the trail that circles the pond.

The 1884 census of Whiteway shows 10 families with 8 fishing rooms all representing the earliest settlers. The surnames included two families each of Burgess, Legge and Rowe and one family each of Harnum, Kennedy, Pottle and Soper (See Appendix 1). It appears that Terrance (Terry), Mary, and son Nicholas Kennedy are the Roman Catholic family of three noted in the census records of 1874 and 1884.



Figure 3: Kennedy 1877 Victoria Grant

Terry built a 'tilt' house on the east side of the Whiteway Brook in the early 1870s. In 1877, he obtained a grant for his land, the first known registered piece of property in Whiteway.

Following the violent riots in 1883 between Catholics and Protestants, aptly called the 'Harbour Grace Affray', folklore has it that Terry had a dispute with some Orangemen from Green's Harbour while they were harvesting caplin at Backside Beach (located between

Whiteway and Green's Harbour). Terry was accused of spreading rumours to the Catholics in Harbour Grace that led to an assault on a Green's Harbour man. One is loath to think, although likely the case, that Terry was 'driven out' of Whiteway due to religious reasons.

Of course, Kennedy was likely aware of the rising trend in sawmilling in Trinity Bay south and knew he could get a good price for his land by the brook, which was an ideal, undeveloped location. Whatever the reason, Kennedy put out word he was selling his property. According to author Melvin Rowe, rumour had it that shipbuilder Enoch Rowe of Hearts Content had offered 10 British pounds, but seeing the opportunity coupled with good timing, entrepreneur Moses Drover won out with an offer of 20. The Kennedy family sold their property and moved away shortly after the 1884 census.

By the mid 1880's, the operation Moses had in Harbour Grace was well established and could now be managed by his 20-year-old son, Leander, and possibly other family members. As would become one of his life's trademarks, Moses set up a business, made it successful, then left it to one of his sons to manage.

And so it was that in 1885, Moses Drover and his crew anchored the schooner *William* in Whiteway bay. The Whiteway brook geography was ideal for a sawmill that needed to be powered by a 'hydro-turbine'. Taking advantage of the natural drop at the end of Jimmy Rowe's Pond, Moses built a 6 ft high, 250 ft wooden dam across the brook. This dam, coupled with a 150 ft wooden chute built to carry the water to a 12 ft high penstock attached to the side of the mill (see Figure 27), also provided enough 'force' to drive a 100hp hydro-turbine. When it first opened, the mill produced only rough-sawn lumber, but Moses soon installed a 'shingle machine' to produce wooden shingles. By 1887, the mill was fully functional.

On the 1889 Voters list for Whiteway, it is noted that Moses has been in Trinity south district for five years and his occupation is a 'sawmill wright'. His son Leander was noted on the Voters list as a joiner (specialized carpenter). That same year, Moses was on the outport road board for Whiteway along with Nathan Rowe and Abram Barrett. Being on the road board meant that Moses could lobby for Trinity south road maintenance which was important to his business, considering foot and horse and cart travellers would pass by his milling operation and future store. Moses would periodically sail to Harbour Grace to check on his business interest there, and to see some of his children.

With the mill producing several hundred thousand shingles and thousands of feet of lumber per year, Moses encountered transport issues. The main market was in St. John's and with only the schooner *William* available, Moses decided to build two new schooners in Whiteway utilizing the beach area where Jimmy Rowe had built schooners 70 years previous. He also had his sights set on venturing into the Labrador fishery which could be very lucrative to fishing merchants.

In the winter of 1890, Moses hired master shipbuilder Absalom March of Green's Harbour to build a coasting schooner. Absalom and his crew of 12 men built the *Water Lily* and launched her in May 1891 on the old Rowe dockyard site. Absalom would be back the following year to build the schooner *Souris Belle* for Moses. The newspapers of the day had this to say.

The 'Water Lily', a fine schooner of 40 tons burden, was lately launched at Witless Bay, Trinity Bay, for Mr. Moses Drover of this place. She reflects credit on her builders and is a valuable addition to the large fleet of fine schooners in this colony. Mr. Drover has for the past four years been running a shingle and lumber operation at Witless Bay. Harbor Grace Standard May 19, 1891.

A fine schooner of forty tons has just been launched at Witless Bay, Trinity Bay, for Mr. Moses Drover. The schooner is called the 'Water Lily' and does ample credit to the ingenuity of her builder, Mr. Absalom March. Evening Telegram May 16, 1891.

The schooner 'Souris Belle' arrived here yesterday from Witless Bay, Trinity Bay, via Harbour Grace, where she landed a deck load of lumber. The Souris Belle is a new schooner, of about 45 tons, owned by Mr. Moses Drover, who had her built during the past winter at the above place. Evening Telegram May 11, 1892.

During this period, Moses also built a 'fishermen's supply store' that carried fishing supplies and essential foodstuffs used by fishing families. Located by the bridge across Whiteway brook on the old road to Green's Harbour, the shop was in a good location. He also built a loading dock off the Whiteway beach and constructed a wooden cart bridge over the Whiteway brook for moving shingles and lumber from the sawmill to the newly built schooners.

It was not until 1891 that Moses obtained an official grant for the block of land beside the brook where his sawmill was located. Inspection of early maps and land grants/claims suggest Moses purchased pieces of land from both Terrence Kennedy and Henry Rowe. Henry had settled on his

grandfather Jimmy Rowe's shipyard site and claimed several pieces of land beside Whiteway brook.

The year 1892 proved to be a fortuitous one for Moses. That year the *Water Lily* transported several loads of lumber and wood shingles to Harbour Grace and St. John's and returned to Whiteway with cargos of general supplies.

On July 8, 1892, a fire broke out in a St. John's stable caused by a careless smoker. Within hours,



Figure 4: Great Fire of 1892

the fire had destroyed most of St. John's, leaving thousands homeless and causing millions in property damage. This tragic event turned into a boon for Moses in the coming years as lumber for houses and wood shingles to roof them were in great demand during the rebuilding of the Capital City.

In September, Moses took a trip on the S.S. *Victoria* to Battle Harbour on the coast of Labrador to check out the 'floaters fishery'. The

following spring, his schooner *William* under Capt. Robert Hobbs would sail from Whiteway to the Labrador fishery. Captain Hobbs was a master mariner from Heart's Delight who Moses hired through-out the 1890's. The Hobbs family including Robert, his brother Jacob and his son Thomas were all seafaring captains.

The year ended in joy when on October 24, 1892, Moses married his second wife, Jane Courage, who was the daughter of Joseph Courage and Jane Oldford of Catalina. Several newspapers carried the announcement. It was at this point that Moses, who was born into the Anglican religion, switched over to join the United Church.

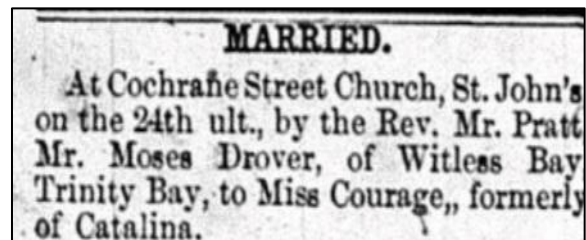


Figure 5: Marriage Announcement

Mr. Moses Drover was united to Miss Courage, formerly of Catalina, by the Rev. Mr. Pratt, in the Cochrane Street United Church. Mr. Drover and bride drove to the Railway Depot, shortly before 10 o'clock this forenoon, and in real good style – they went in a brougham, drawn by a pair of horses. Soon afterwards they took passage by train to their new home. Evening Telegram Oct. 25, 1892.

On January 30, 1893, Moses' eldest son Leander married Charlotte (Lottie) Sheppard in St Peter's Church, Harbour Grace. It was after the two marriages and the dramatic increase in demand for wood products, that Moses built the large Drover house (See Figures 18, 21) by the Whiteway Brook. The house was an imposing 50 x 80 feet with three chimneys, ten bedrooms with a fireplace in each one, a large kitchen and dining room, and a parlour with a grand piano.

When built, the house was one of the largest houses outside of St. John's. Businesspeople who traveled the area and did business with the Drovers often stayed in the house. The news clip below describes merchant Drover returning home in 1893.

Lumber and Fishery - Mr. Moses Drover, who is so much engaged in the lumber industry, left by this morning's train for home, Witless Bay, Trinity Bay. His schooner Water Lily sailed for that place last evening with a load of provisions, and his schooner William, Robert Hobbs, master, very shortly sails from there for Labrador to prosecute a 'floater fishery'. Evening Telegram June 13, 1893.

The rebuilding of St. John's after the fire was creating reliable employment at the Drover mill. Winter logging work, coupled with seasonal fishing, provided families with the means they needed to survive. From the late 1880s thru to the 1920s, the Whiteway sawmill helped attract other settler families. The surnames include Barrett, Bishop, Drover (related to Moses), George, Golden, Jackson, Walker, and Whelan (See Appendix 1). Many descendants of these families still live in and around Whiteway.

In 1894, to meet the growing demand, Moses made other expansions to his business. On the lumber side, he installed a new 'matcher/planer'. This machine planed lumber to a smooth finish, called 'dressed' lumber, that sold at a higher price. It also produced 'tongue and groove' or matched board that was popular for sheathing houses.

On the fishery side, he began buying dry codfish and pickled salmon from local fisherman, using the 'truck system' in which the fishermen received goods and supplies instead of cash. He built a small cod-liver oil operation on the beach near his loading dock, located by the Burgess fishing stage. Barrels of cod livers and oil were collected from fisherman and re-processed by heating the oil in a large metal drum. This produced a refined, cleaner oil that garnered a premium price on the market. His cargoes became more diversified.

The schooner Water Lily, belonging to Mr. Moses Drover, arrived last night from Witless Bay, Trinity Bay, laden with fish below and lumber and oil on deck. - Evening Telegram Oct. 27, 1894.

In the spring of 1895, Moses Drover had an accident. He was welding near his sawmill in Whiteway when a hot flanker flew up and hit him in the eye. The Evening Telegram of March 30 mentions Moses arriving at St. John's to attend hospital, his youngest son William "crying beside him".

For 1895, the Evening Telegram records six arrivals of the schooner *Water Lily* to St. John's, all trips captained by Robert Hobbs. In the spring and early summer, three schooner loads of lumber and shingles, in August two loads of dry cod fish, oil and

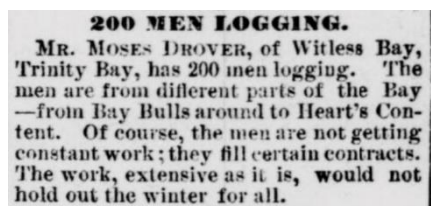
BROUGHT TO THE CITY FOR OPERATION.—Mr. Moses Drover, carrying on business at Witless Bay, Trinity Bay, was brought on to the city by this evening's train, to undergo an operation. One of his eyes was badly injured by a flying piece of steel. It is believed that the eye will have to be taken out to save the sight of the other. As the patient was led through the station, a little son of his, waiting, sobbed piteously with genuine grief.

Figure 6: Welding Accident

a few lobsters and in December, a load of shingles and wooden staves used for making flour barrels.

The next year, the *Water Lily* made five voyages to St. John's and at least one to Harbour Grace, all with lumber and shingles. However, it was a very poor year for the fishery. No large cargoes of dry codfish or oil are recorded. In fact, by the following spring, many families in Whiteway were in desperate need. The House of Assembly records for April 1897 noted that "Mr. Moses Drover of Witless Bay in Trinity district has been sent instructions to expend any sum for the relief of the destitute."

In the 1890s and early 1900s, there are numerous mentions in the newspapers of Moses arriving by train to St. John's. There was no railway in Trinity South at the time, so it is likely Moses travelled to Harbour Grace by schooner and caught the train from there to the city. He preferred travelling by train because he could arrive before his schooners docked. Moses would negotiate the sale of the incoming cargo of lumber and fish directly with wholesalers such as Martin Brothers, Job Brothers and Baine Johnson. Moses also purchased supplies for the return trip to the outport.



200 MEN LOGGING.
MR. MOSES DROVER, of Witless Bay, Trinity Bay, has 200 men logging. The men are from different parts of the Bay—from Bay Bulls around to Heart's Content. Of course, the men are not getting constant work; they fill certain contracts. The work, extensive as it is, would not hold out the winter for all.

Figure 7: 200 Contracted Loggers

By 1897, there were 70 men employed full time in sawmills between Heart's Desire and Hopeall and many more for winter logging. A news article in December 1896 mentions that Moses has 200 men around the Trinity Bay area who were contracted to supply logs and he was expecting a 'spring rush' at the sawmill. The newspapers record the *Water Lily* making five trips to St. John's and one to Harbour Grace with

lumber and shingles. Two trips by the *Water Lily* in 1898 show the scope of typical cargoes.

Water Lily, Capt. Robert Hobbs, arrived with 200,000 shingles, 10,000 feet of hardwood, and 40 seal pelts. Evening Telegram, May 15, 1898.

The Water Lily, belonging to Mr. M. Drover of Witless Bay, T.B., arrived here at 7 o'clock this morning. She has 380 quintals fish, 3 tierce salmon, 3 casks oil and 70,000 shingles. Evening Telegram August 3, 1898.

Then March 1899 brought disaster. A mild spring, excessive rainfall, and a 'sudden melting' of ice on Jimmy Rowe's Pond combined to cause a flood that broke the now 15-year-old dam, destroyed the chute, and washed out a portion of the sawmill.

Mr. Moses Drover, who suffered the loss of his sawmill at Witless Bay, in the flood that occurred last week, is making preparations to erect it again so as to be ready for sawing for the 25th of the month. He has now enough logs to produce fifty thousand feet of lumber ready for the mill. Evening Telegram March 15, 1899.

Green's Harbour – Drover Brothers Company

Within weeks of the mill washout at Whiteway, Moses decided to start a second sawmill in the neighboring community of Green's Harbour. At the time, the population there was 500 and Ebenezer J. Cram was the main merchant trader. Moses left Leander in charge of the repairs at Whiteway and headed to Montreal to look at mill machinery. On November 7, 1899, he purchased a piece of waterfront land for \$50 from fisherman William Day of Green's Harbour. Unlike the mill at Whiteway that used a water-driven turbine, Moses imported a 'stationary steam boiler engine' to power the new sawmill, a setup that required a much smaller layout. By the fall of 1900, he had completed the new sawmill, a modest sized house, and a storage building. He also found anchorage for his schooners the *Water Lilly* and *Souris Belle*.

Moses's move to Greens Harbour, partially due to unfortunate circumstances, was at an opportune time. The lumbering industry was on the rise as an article in the Daily News from February 1899 noted "not a man that can wield an axe but finds steady work". Fifty men were employed for Josiah Taylor's sawmill in Hopeall. At Green's Harbour, EJ Cramm needed 40,000 sawlogs and Charles Crocker 26,000 for their sawmills. Moses knew the demand was there and that good stands of timber were available around Glover Road, which is why he choose to setup in the northeast corner of the harbour.

On August 3, 1900, the Evening Telegram published a report from merchant E. J. Cramm saying the fishery in Green's Harbour and vicinity was "a total failure and business was at a standstill". This was followed by a raging windstorm in September.

The storm of last week did considerable damage at Green's Harbour and vicinity. The schooner 'Hopeful', owned by Mr. Moses Drover, was driven onshore and is a total wreck. Everything was swept, boats, wharfs, stages, and flakes blown down and washed away. The Water Lily, on her way from St. John's, reached safely at Deer Harbour at 3 a.m. with her bulwarks broken in. Evening Telegram September 20, 1900.

By 1901 Moses had changed the company name to Drover Brothers, recognizing two of his sons (Lorenzo and William) involvement in the business, and continued to expand his ventures into shipbuilding and the Labrador fishery.

The pretty little schooner 'Silver Cloud' built in Trinity Bay this year by Drover Bros., is now at Baine Johnson's wharf. She is a regular clipper and well found in every way. Another new craft by the same people is now on the way here for registry. Evening Herald June 6, 1901.

During the early 1900's, before the opening of the Heart's Content branch line in 1915, there was high demand for small to medium sized schooners for coastal trading and the Labrador fishery. Between 1900 and 1909, Moses commissioned the building of at least nine schooners in Green's Harbour. This was in addition to the two he had previously built at Whiteway.

While some of the ships were sold for a profit, others were favorites that the Drovers used for years, including: the *Water Lily* built at Whiteway by Absalom March of Green's Harbour, the

Ocean Bride built by Martin S. Rowe of Hopeall, and the *Trafalgar*, built by James Green of Green's Harbour.

How well Moses did at the Labrador fishery is unknown, as the fish he brought home was often shipped along with locally purchased fish for delivery to St. John's. The Evening Telegram of August 10, 1910, reports that he received a letter from the skipper of his schooner *Toledo D* fishing at Cape Harrison, Labrador saying the fishing was reasonable.

When Moses celebrated the launch of his new schooner *Coronation* in April 1902, his joy was short-lived. On May 14, disaster struck when a fire broke out that destroyed the sawmill and store at Green's Harbour.

The loss to Mr. Drover is a serious one. Besides the mill, machinery, lumber and logs, the store destroyed contained all the flour, pork, tea, salt, nets, and other heavy goods he had on hand necessary to supply his fishermen, all being consumed. His total loss is over \$10,000. Evening Herald May 20, 1902.

Once again, Moses imported new machinery and the sawmill and store were rebuilt that summer. A tragic incident occurred in March of 1903 when Charles Crocker, a good friend of Moses and owner of a sawmill and coastal schooner, dropped dead while visiting Drover's sawmill. The 1904 McAlpine Directory for Green's Harbour shows Moses and Lorenzo Drover, 'steam sawmill and general dealers', along with clerks Bertram and William Drover.

Moses, always so energetic and rarely ill, nearly met his demise in March 1905 after a battle with the LaGrippe. This deadly flu virus, that killed thousands of Newfoundlanders, left him bed-ridden for three weeks at a St. John's hotel. During that year, Moses and Jane made several trips by train to St. John's to look at establishing a home in the city. They purchased property on the corner of Monkstown and Circular Road across from land owned by Sir William Whiteway. They named their estate *Wastena*. In the spring of 1906, they hosted a 'seal flipper dinner' for friends at their new home.

Newspaper articles from 1906-07 mention the *Trafalgar* master James Green discharging fish and 50,000 shingles at St. John's, the *Ocean Bride* master Hamsard Bryant leaving the city with cargo bound for Trinity Bay, and the *Toledo D* being built at Cavendish for the Labrador fishery.

In the fall of 1907, the forces of nature would spell trouble once more.

Mr. M. Drover received word from Green's Harbor yesterday, telling of the havoc wrought by the recent gale, at that place and vicinity. At Green's Harbor, Cramm's schooner, Phoenix, is ashore, a total loss. Mr. Drover's vessel, Gladys May, is ashore at Cavendish, but not much damaged. She had no cargo aboard. The sea which hove in at Green's Harbor, was the worst ever seen there. It rose over the wharves and washed off everything on them. Mr. Cramm's wharf was carried away completely, and 300,000 shingles, which were piled on Mr. Drover's wharf, ready for shipment, were swept off, and scattered all around the Bay. Evening Telegram September 7, 1907.

The loss here was quite substantial as the number of shingles likely represented what the mill had produced during the entire summer sawing season. We can assume that the product from the early spring sawing had already been shipped.

1908 brought many new changes for the Drover family. However, the year started off with a scare when the *Ocean Bride* nearly sank while trying to enter the harbour at St. John's.

The schooner 'Ocean Bride', with Capt. Robinson, of Green's Harbour when beating into the St John's narrows ran against the cliff near Hay Cove and broke her bowsprit and jibboom. The captain got in the boat and rowed in for a tug and asked the tug 'John Green' to bring them in, but the Green was not sent until 4am. The schooner was in a bad situation and if the wind had gone southerly or there was a sea on, she would have gone down for sure. Evening Telegram May 25, 1908.

In September of that fall, Moses' youngest son Bertram left the family and immigrated to the USA, not to return. He became a floor manager in a factory and was an active member in the local Masonic lodges around Cambridge, Massachusetts. Recognizing his stature and contribution to the local organization, a customized Masonic sword with Knights Templar emblems and Bertram's name etched upon it was made.

Brown's Arm Sawmill

On August 28, 1908, Moses expanded his business enterprise to three sawmills by purchasing, for \$2700, a sawmill operation in Brown's Arm.

The well-known shingle manufacturer, Moses Drover of Witless Bay and Greens Harbour has extended his business to Exploits Bay having purchased the mill at Brown's Arm formerly owned by Caleb Manuel. Lumber operations in progress and presiding of the manager, William Drover. Evening Telegram December 1, 1908.

On October 22, 1908, Moses' daughter Elfrida married widower William Falkingham a successful farmer from Ontario. There were writeups in the newspapers describing the wedding ceremony and the reception at the Drover home in Green's Harbour.

On July 19, 1910, Isa Drover youngest daughter of Moses Drover married Samuel Gover, a teacher from Trouty at the Anglican church in Green's Harbour. Isa was a church organist, and the couple were quite popular in nearby communities. The event was covered in several newspapers. The Harbour Grace Standard of August 8 noted that the couple were married by the Rev. J.J. White and the bride was given away by her brother Leander. The bridesmaids were Sarah Giles of New Harbor and Florrie Drover of Whiteway while the groom was supported by J. G. Hodder of Heart's Delight.

St. John's - Finishing Sawmill and Lumber Store



Figure 8: Orange Lodge Lumber Receipt

By now Moses was living permanently at his home, the *Wastena* on Circular Road in St. John's. He had also constructed a 'finishing' sawmill, storage building, and lumber yard on Temperance Street, directly across from the famous 'Four Sisters' building, from which he sold a variety of lumber products. Of course, Moses continued to be the main shareholder as shown on this 1913 receipt for lumber and supplies sold to the Orange Lodge at Green's Harbour.

Retirement and Legacy

During his last years, Moses was an active and influential member of the Cochrane Street Methodist Centennial Church in St John's. He was on the building committee alongside John C. Crosbie and others for the new church that was officially opened in 1915 replacing the old one built in 1872. He and his wife Jane donated funds to the Methodist orphanage, the Mount Cashel boy's baseball team, and many other causes.

On February 7, 1917, Moses sold the Brown's Arm operation to Drover's Brothers for \$1. Perhaps he should have asked a bit more as a few weeks later, thieves broke into his house while he was on vacation, drank all his liquor, and stole several pairs of his boots.

Moses Drover passed away after a short illness on October 30, 1918. Some quotes from newspaper obituaries and his funeral speak to the character of the man.

As an example of the best type of man which Newfoundland has produced, Mr. Drover stood easily first. Of indomitable courage and energy, he lived a life of constant activity, and his business capacity was displayed in all the branches of the country's trade. Evening Telegram May 31, 1918.

He entered the lumber business early in life and his success as solely due to his splendid natural business accumen. Later, he entered the general merchantile trade which resulted in the building up of two large branches in Trinity Bay, one at Green's Hr. and the other at Whiteway. Evening Herald May 30, 1918.

The services at the graveside were taken by Rev. Dr. Bond and Rev T. W. Atkinson, and the last sad tribute of respect paid to one of whom it may rightly be said, "Friends he had many, but enemies none". The Evening Herald June 4, 1918.

In his will, Moses left \$2,000 each (about \$50,000 in today's dollars) to William and Lorenzo and leaves the home in St. John's to his wife Jane along with an annual stipend from future company income. Jane and their daughter Mary continued to live at the *Wastena* home. They advertised in the newspaper for a maid that knew how to prepare "regular outport style meals". Five years later, Jane (now calling herself Jennie) would emigrate to the United States where she married James Rice. Jennie passed away in Brooklyn, NY on August 14, 1944, at age 85.

After his death, Moses Drover's businesses continued to be operated by his descendants. The next section of this document will look briefly at the entrepreneurial activities of three of his sons - Lorenzo at Green's Harbour, William at Brown's Arm and St. John's, Leander at Whiteway and two of his grandsons - Walter and Frank at Whiteway.

Family Sawmilling and Merchandising Business

Thomas Lorenzo Drover

Thomas Lorenzo Drover (1874-1941) was born in Harbour Grace. He came to Whiteway to join

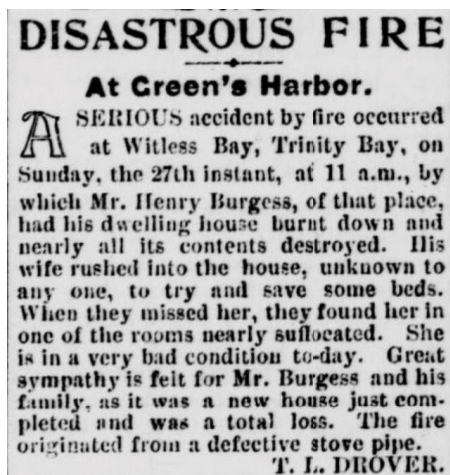


Figure 9: Whiteway Fire

his father in 1889 and moved to Green's Harbour in 1900. He married Jessie Russell of Bay Roberts in 1901, and they had four children named Harold, Chesley, Jennie and Dorothy. Lorenzo often used T.L. as his business handle, as evidenced in the April 28, 1902, Evening Telegram report he filed about a fire that occurred in Whiteway.

By 1904, Lorenzo was in partnership with his father on the Green's Harbour sawmill and took over management after Moses had relocated to St. John's in 1905. Lorenzo also engaged in the Labrador fishery with vessels crewed and sailing out of Green's Harbour. Summer voyages in 1922 suggest that he was successful at this venture. A quintal is 112 lbs. of dry salt codfish.

Schooners Dorothy Drover, with 475 quintals, and the Trafalgar, with 250 quintals, arrived at Green's Harbour from the Labrador yesterday. Evening Telegram September 27, 1922.

The Drover sawmill at Green's Harbour had a great year in 1924 resulting mostly from the poor local fishery the year before.

Several men of this place have sought employment at Humbermouth, and more are leaving shortly. The fishery outlook is not very encouraging. The greater number of working men have been employed by Drover Bros. this past winter, and as a result more mill logs have been placed on their premises than for the past ten years. Evening Telegram April 1, 1924.

Richard Hughes 1917.		4 years 1917	
Lo. D. roses Pres.		Aug 9	
Feb 20	20 shags 2 H. Caplin Quine	160	320
Apr 13	20 lbs Bark		300
13	2 pairs old clothes	17 1/2	950
May 16	1 tub paint		100
17	5 lbs salt	2 1/2	1000
29	10 lb Ham King Runklers		750
July 3	2 Hds Salt	10	160
4	1 1/2 yd ribbon	18	27
	1 Blouse		150
	2 1/2 Hay fork		10
Aug 27	1 Hds Salt		300
	1 Hds Salt		300
	1000 Hacks		40
	1 Sine		50
29	100 biscuits		160
	1 top shirt		210
			26.67
	paid paid		249.01
			305.68
			250
			303.8
			215.6

As merchants, Drover Brothers supplied fishermen with goods and services on credit that started at the beginning of the year. In the receipt to the left, Richard Burgess bought caplin twine, salt, oil clothes, etc. on account. At the end of the season, Burgess sold his fish to Drover Brothers and paid off his credit note.

Moses' wife Jane had relocated to the United States. The 1935 census for St. John's shows Lorenzo and family living on Circular Road. He is listed as a merchant and runs a boarding house at his home. Both Lorenzo and Jessie were quite active in the church. Lorenzo passed away in 1941 and Jesse in 1947. They are buried in the Protestant Cemetery in St. John's.



Lorenzo's son Harold was born at Green's Harbour in 1904. Harold married Mabel McKinlay of St. John's and in July 1927 they took a trip to New York city to celebrate their union. Mabel was born in Glasgow, Scotland. Her parents were James McKinlay and Bertha Young, the latter from Rose Blanche, NL. The British Navy awarded a medal of bravery to James who was Chief Officer on the SS *Prospero* during its efforts to rescue survivors from the SS *Florizel* shipwreck disaster in the winter of

At the time Harold took over operation of the Green's Harbour sawmill in the mid 1930s, the government was promoting agriculture. Harold took advantage and began importing young poultry as breeding stock, which he sold in the local outports and in St. John's.

14

the sale of his stationary sawmill machinery but continued to operate a general goods and grocery store until his retirement in the 1970s. Harold was noted for keeping a clean and tidy shop that carried the 'best waxed baloney, cheese cut from a block, and barrelled apples'. Harold and Mabel Drover passed away in 1987 and 1979, respectively and are buried in the Anglican cemetery at Green's Harbour.

William Lyon Drover

William Drover (1883-1955) was born in Harbour Grace. He finished school there and later attended the Methodist College in St. John's. When his father, Moses, first sailed to Whiteway in 1885, he arrived on the schooner *William* which he had named after his youngest son. After college, William worked for eight years as a clerk for his father's sawmill and merchant business at Green's Harbour. In 1906, he married Beatrice Minnie Barbour of Newtown, Bonavista Bay. Their nine children include Ted, Howard, Gerald, Harry, Myrtle, Jack, Marjorie, Olga, and Louise.

Minnie Barbour was born in the famous Barbour family of sea captains and merchants. The two homes in the Barbour Heritage Village in Newtown belonged to her grandfather and family patriarch, Benjamin Barbour and her brother, Captain Alphaeus Barbour.

William operated the Brown's Arm sawmill, purchased by his father in 1908, successfully for two decades. The 1921 census for Brown's Arm has William Drover, lumber merchant, wife Minnie and 7 children. An advertisement for the same year in the Twillingate Sun has Drover Brothers of Brown's Arm selling a variety of lumber products from the sawmill.

At some point, William purchased a house on Freshwater Road, St. John's. After this, he would go to the outport during the spring and summer 'sawing season' while locals from the Brown's Arm area managed the fall and winter logging activities.



Figure 12: Brown's Arm Lumber for Sale

After his father died in 1918, William also took over the lumber yard on Temperance Street in St. John's. In the late 1920s he closed the Brown's Arm sawmill and opened a new mill in Alder Cove, Exploits Bay. His son, well-known ships artist and maritime historian, Ted Drover ran this mill for a few years. Ted would later be hired to manage the sawmill that supplied the timber used to build the famous *Splinter Fleet* of ships at Clarenville.



Figure 13: Temperance Street Notice

the day. He also served as a board member for the Cochrane Street United church. Minnie Drover passed away in 1950 while William passed away in 1955.

The sawmill and lumber store on Temperance Street were shut down. The Daily News of September 22, 1955, advertised the sale of remaining lumber and the property was put up for rent. By 1958, the family had sold the property.

Leander Drover

Leander Drover (1864-1942) was born in Upper Island Cove, the eldest son of Moses and Julia Ann Drover. Leander attended school in Upper Island Cove, and he learned about machinery from his grandfather Aaron and woodworking from his father Moses. When his father first sailed to Whiteway in 1885, Leander remained in Harbour Grace and looked after his father's shop. He came to Whiteway in 1889 to join his father in the sawmill business. Leander is listed on the 1889 voter's list as a 'joiner'.



Figure 14: Leander and Charlotte Wedding

On January 30, 1893, he married Charlotte (Lottie) Sheppard at St Peter's Church, Harbor Grace. They had six children including Walter, Frank, Eleanor, Julia Florence, Caroline, and Lillian.

By the time Moses had moved to St. John's in 1905, Leander was running the Whiteway sawmill "on his own account", a fact which is mentioned in one of Moses' obituaries. Apparently, he was not a partner in the firm of Drover Brothers and did not participate in his father's shipbuilding and Labrador fishery ventures at Green's Harbour. However, he did use his father's schooners to transport products to Harbour Grace and St. John's until the freight train came thru in 1915.

Leander and Lottie faced a family tragedy on November 17, 1904, when their 7-year-old daughter Eleanor drowned after falling into Whiteway Brook near the sawmill. She had wandered off while playing outside with her younger siblings.

All the neighboring houses and harbour were searched with no trace of her. They found her caught under the bridge that crosses the river at the entrance to the sea. The sad news of her death has cast a gloom over the whole community. Harbour Grace Standard November 25, 1904.

The bridge was a wooden cart bridge near the mouth of Whiteway brook that the Drovers built to get to their loading dock on the beach. Leander later bought a brookside strip of land from Henry Rowe and built a tramway that moved the lumber all the way from the mill to the beach. The portion of the tramway across the brook was discarded after the arrival of the railway in 1915 (See Figure 19). Like his father, Leander also faced disaster from natural forces.

At Witless Bay, the planks of a new wharf, owned by Mr. L Drover, were torn off by the force of the waves, and 30,000 shingles, piled on the wharf, swept away. – Daily News September 21, 1907.

Two years later, the forces of nature struck again.

Great Havoc in Trinity Bay – The storm of last Friday and Saturday did much damage in Trinity Bay. All the flakes and stages were swept away, several boats were lost. The heavy rains created great floods, and Leander Drover's sawmill was filled with water, the side was torn out of it and the machinery and belting was badly damaged. At Cavendish, all the road was swept away near the beach. Evening Telegram December 30, 1909.

In 1910, the Drovers nearly lost a second daughter except for the heroism of John Brace.

While the Water Lily was loading lumber at Witless Bay, T.B., one of her crew, John Brace, saved the life of the little 10-year-old daughter of Leander Drover. The child was on a pile of lumber when she slipped and fell fully ten feet into the water, going to bottom. She made no outcry...until Brace saw her come to the surface of the water. Fully clad as he was the man jumped overboard and seizing the child swam ashore with her. Evening Telegram June 16, 1910.

Unlike his father and most of his siblings, who switched to the Methodist religion, Leander remained a loyal adherent to the Church of England faith. Leander along with Abram Barrett and several George families, initiated the building of St. George the Martyr Anglican Church at Whiteway in 1913.

In 1916, Leander hosted a patriotic concert at the little schoolhouse with special guest, Lance Corporal Aaron Bryant of Whiteway, who would be killed in action in France the next year. In 1920 Leander became a member of the Anglican Board of Education for the Heart's Delight district and in 1929, he sponsored the first 'summer school' for elementary students at Whiteway that focused on arts and crafts.

William Halfyard was the member for Trinity Bay in the Newfoundland House of Assembly from 1918 to 1928. When he was campaigning by train through Trinity Bay south in 1919, he mentioned Leander for his generosity.

At Whiteway and Eastern Corner we received a grand reception. Mr. Leander Drover entertained us right royally. His mill was stopped working to allow the workmen to attend our meeting. Volleys of musketry rent the air, especially at Eastern Corner. When driving through, flags were displayed, and we received a grand send off. Evening Advocate October 29, 1919.

In 1917, Leander decided to turn the large Drover house built by his father into a duplex with his son Walter living on one side and Frank on the other. A letter dated Dec 10, 1917, shows Leander ordering stair balusters from Saunders and Howell in Carbonear.

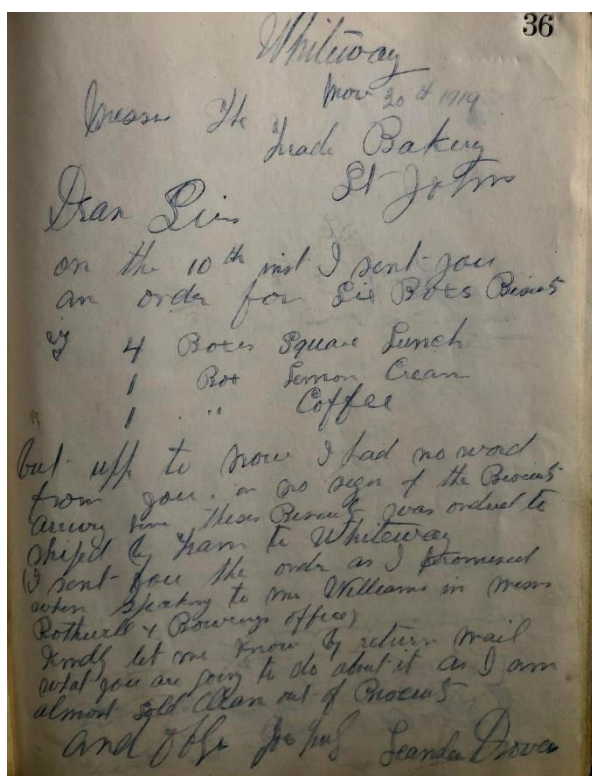


Figure 15: Letter from Leander Drover

The Drover family possess four of Leander's journals dated between 1917-1927. The journals give insight into the sawmill day-to-day activities such as ordering equipment, purchasing goods and services, order fulfillment and his involvement in the community. In the letter to the left dated November 20, 1919, Leander is checking on an order of biscuits including lemon creams as well as coffee from a bakery in St. John's. Leander had placed the order 10 days previous, and he requested the biscuits be shipped to Whiteway via train.

The mill operated on a steady basis as shown by the 1921 census for Whiteway, which notes 90% of the fishermen with a secondary income from logging. However, in a March 1921 letter to merchant Nathaniel Piercey of Winterton, Leander mentions a fire at his store in February that forced him to import new equipment that was destroyed. The fire resulted in a loss of \$5000 without any insurance coverage.

During the late 1920s and 1930s economic depression, mill production gradually decreased over time. There was also competition from other sawmills using smaller diesel-powered engines. In fact, two more sawmills opened during this time in the west end of Whiteway including one by Richard Burgess in 1919 and a second by Moses and Frederick George in the mid-1930s. The latter mill also produced wooden roof shingles.

Wilfred Rowe described that he and his father, John Rowe engaged in 'winter logging' for Leander's sawmill in the early 1930s.

As I was now out of school, I had to go in the woods every day in the winter along with my father to cut logs for Drover's sawmill. This way we could earn a few dollars to keep going until the next fishing season rolled around. Just imagine - get up before daylight, feed the horse, get breakfast, pack a lunch, and then leave to travel over ponds and paths to get to where we would cut. We didn't come out of the woods until just before dark. Then we had to gather in firewood for the stove to last until the next evening. Sunday was the only day we had off, as in those days no work was done on Sunday except for feeding the animals.

It was during the depression years that three of Leander's daughters including Florence, Caroline, and Lillian, like many young women of the outports, sought employment as domestic servants in the homes of the well-to-do families in the United States especially in the Boston area. They took the train from Whiteway to St. John's and sailed from there by ship.

The 1935 census for Whiteway lists Leander as lumber and general merchant, Walter as sawmill operator, and Frank as carpenter and cabinet maker. Walter's wife Lillian managed the general goods and grocery store. Leander became ill in his last years, so his sons took over full management of the business premises. Leander passed away in 1942 and his wife Lottie in 1944. They are buried in the Anglican Cemetery at Whiteway.

Walter Drover

Walter Drover (1893-1956) was married twice. In December 1915 he married Mabel Petley of St John's, and they had two children, Margaret, and Winston. Walter's second wife Lillian Snow was born in 1901 at Clarke's Beach. She was teaching at Whiteway and boarding at the home of John and Minnie Rowe when she met Walter. See figure 15 picture of their family, L-R, Graham, Phyllis,



Figure 16: Walter Drover and Family

Eleanor, Valerie, Lillian and Walter. Tragedy befell the family on December 17, 1934, when 19-year-old Winston drowned when he and Albert George were hunting seabirds and their dory overturned in Whiteway bay.

Walter and Lily were very active in community and church. As a young man Walter enjoyed entertainment and was known for his recitations especially at concerts held in the Orange Hall at Green's Harbour. He later served on the Church of England board of education for the district. Besides managing the store, Lily loved to sew. In the 1930s, she won several first-place prizes for her embroidered bedspreads at the annual Trinity South Agricultural Fair held at Heart's Content.

After Walter passed away in 1956, the store was managed by Lily and son Graham. In 1958, the sawmill and general store would close, and Lily and Graham would relocate to St John's. Lily died in 1993 and Graham in 2018.

One descendant worthy of mention is Eleanor Drover (1922-2023). She is the first known person born at Whiteway to reach the 100-year milestone. She married Morgan Simmons of Green's Harbour. Their son is well known Newfoundland musician Glenn Simmons. Before she passed away, Eleanor graciously donated the photos of Drover's sawmill at Whiteway for use in this document.

Frank Drover

Frank Drover (1895-1962) was born at Whiteway. On December 6, 1918, he married Louisa Laing of Green's Harbour, affectionately known as 'Louie' to her friends. She was the daughter of Ernest Laing who taught school at Green's Harbour and Winterton. Frank and Louie had three children including Muriel, Clifford, and Joan.

Frank was a specialized carpenter and managed the carpentry workshop that his father Leander had built adjacent to Drover's sawmill. The shop produced various types of standard and decorative molding and trim used in house and building construction. Frank also produced the wood and spring frames used in the manufacture of bedspring mattresses.

When the sawmill and carpentry shop declined in the 1950s, Frank's son Clifford decided to start a small convenience store where Drover's Lane meets the Route 80 highway near Whiteway brook. On July 1st, 1952, Clifford married Mary Penney of Green's Harbour. Mary helped expand the business when she began stocking varieties of cloth, sewing thread and dress making material which was very popular in the outport communities at that time. Clifford and Mary passed away in 2008 and 2018, respectively and are buried in the Anglican cemetery in Whiteway. Their son Craig Drover further expanded the enterprise and Drover's General Store continues to be a successful business at Whiteway today.

Postscript and Pictures

This heritage paper focuses primarily on the Drover sawmill at Whiteway because it was the first one Moses built and the last to close. The Drover Saga is also unique in that it covers three distinct time periods. It starts in the days of sail in the 1880s, covers the 24 years (1915-1939) the train ran in Trinity Bay south, and ends in the era of the automobile.

When it shut down, the Drover sawmill at Whiteway had operated for 73 years from the time it was started in 1885. The dam across Whiteway Brook and the schooner loading dock on the beach would eventually wash away and the hydro-turbine fell into the brook. In the early 1960s, the mill was dismantled by Jethro Harnum and any good salvage was used to build a barn. The large Drover House that Moses built by the Whiteway Brook gradually deteriorated and was torn down by his grandson Clifford in the 1970s. The merchandising aspect of the Drover business started by Moses in the 1890's continues to this day, operating in Whiteway for over 130 years.

Moses Drover left a legacy with respect to his business ventures into sawmilling, shipbuilding, the local and Labrador fishery, and general merchant trading. Aside from his lumberyard in St. John's, his enterprises had a positive economic impact on several outport communities including Whiteway and Green's Harbour in Trinity Bay and Brown's Arm in the Bay of Exploits. In the end, it can be said that Moses Drover richly deserved the title given to him by an anonymous reporter as 'entrepreneur of the Bay Metropolis'.

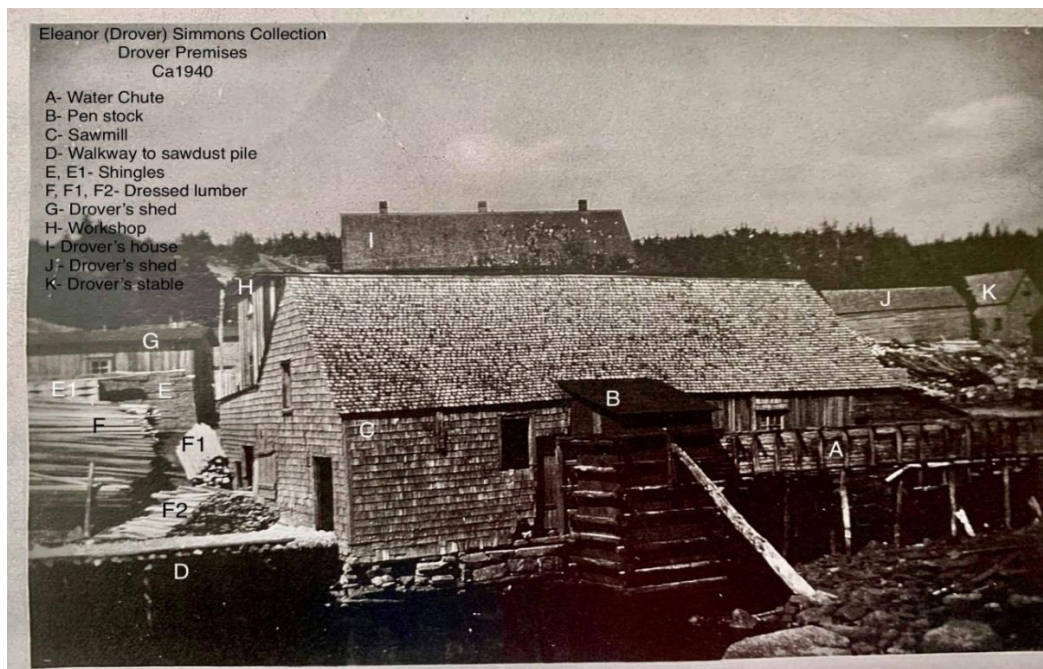


Figure 17: Drover Sawmill

This photo was taken from the hill on Burgess Lane. It overlooks Moses Drover's sawmill and buildings beside the Whiteway Brook. This was his first sawmill and was started in 1885 and closed in 1958.



Figure 18: Drover House and Store

This photo was taken from bridge across Whiteway Brook. It shows the large Drover house after it was turned into a duplex and to the right the Drover's general store and post office. The sawmill is located left just outside this photo.



Figure 19: Drover Mill Layout

This diagram shows the approximate layout of the Drover property and buildings at Whiteway superimposed on a recent Google map of the area. Developed by Robert Burgess.

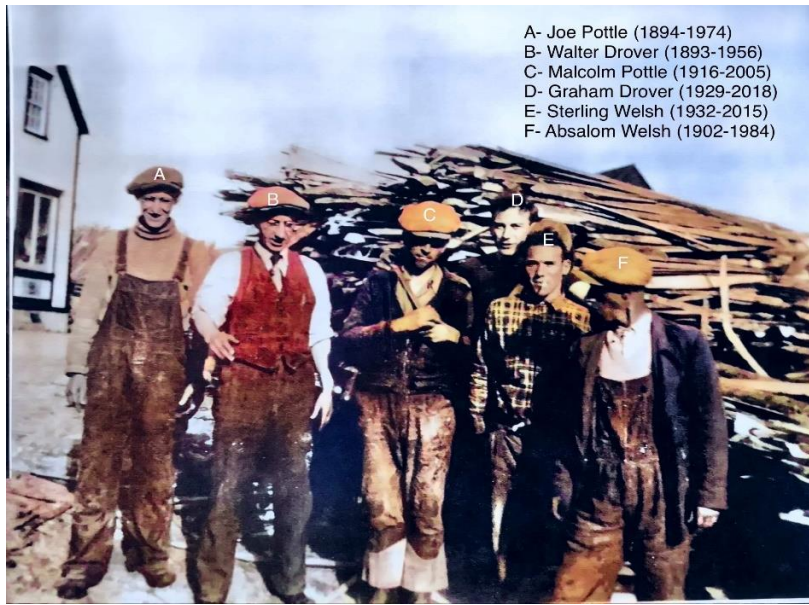


Figure 20: Drover Mill Shift

This photo shows Moses Drover's grandson, Walter Drover and great grandson, Graham Drover along with a crew of sawmill workers from Whiteway ca1940.



Figure 21: Drover House 1974

Far Right, Original Drover House

Appendix 1 – Early Settlers of Whiteway

Period	Last name	First name(s)
Pre-Drover's Mill (< 1885)	Burgess	Charles and Sarah (first settlers)
	Burgess	Henry and Naomi
	Harnum	Elijah and Magdalene
	Kennedy	Terrance and Mary
	Legge	Ananias and Bertha
	Legge	William and Frances
	Pottle	Jonathon and Charlotte
	Rowe	Henry and Julia
	Rowe	Nathan and Martha
	Soper	Samuel and Rhoda
After Drover's Mill (>=1885)	Barrett	Abram and Louisa
	Bishop	Elias and Lavinia
	Drover	Eldred and Agnes
	Drover	Josiah and Sarah
	Drover	Leander and Charlotte
	Drover	Moses and Jane
	George	Ananias and Anne
	George	Augustus and Sarah
	George	Robert and Jane
	Golden	Archibald and Henreitta
	Jackson	Frederick and Hannah
	Jackson	George and Bertha
	Jackson	James and Elizabeth
	Pottle	William and Phoebe
	Walker	Richard and Rachel
	Whelan	John and Margaret

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https://dai.mun.ca/digital/cns_news/

Note 2. All references to vital statistics such as birth, death, and marriage dates as well as passenger lists between Newfoundland and United States were sourced from data records on websites including the Family Search website <https://www.familysearch.org/search/> and the Newfoundland Grand Banks website <http://ngb.chebucto.org/>. Another source included headstones in local graveyards.

Note 3. Census Records and Voters Lists were sourced as per Note 2 above. In addition, some records were sourced from the originals at the Provincial Archives, The Rooms, St. John's.

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