

The Resettlement of Pushthrough.

First Steps

Introduction.

Over the next week or so, I will post some information about the resettlement of Pushthrough, Newfoundland. I came across a series of documents on the resettlement of Pushthrough in the Records of the Department of Community and Social Services which can be found in The Rooms, the Provincial Archives Division, and in the Premier Joseph R. Smallwood Fonds at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University in St. John's. I came across these documents while I was researching for a book I am writing on the relationship between Newfoundland and St. John's since 1957.



(Credit: Maritime History Archives, Memorial University, PF-328.125)

The Department of Community and Social Development of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador retained all of the records from each Householder in all of the communities that resettled in Newfoundland and Labrador from the 1950 to the 1970s. All correspondence between each Householder

and the Government is available. Files were kept for each family. The information is very detailed and seems to be reasonably complete. It usually begins with an application from the Householder and concludes with a Release of Mortgage on their property, giving the Householder all title to the land and property. This usually happened 5 to 7 years after resettlement.

However, the rules and regulations governing privacy outlined in the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2002* states that specific information about individuals cannot be shared without the permission of those individuals mentioned. I was given access to the records for purposes of research and private study, and had to sign a detailed Agreement that there would no sharing of private information without the authorization of copyright owner in question. I cannot provide any private information about the people who moved from Pushthrough.

I can, however, provide some of the general details that are available and that do not contravene the terms of the Agreement that I have signed.

Today, I will provide a brief outline of what seems to be the procedure and the sequence of events that led to the resettlement of Pushthrough.

Fall 1968

I do not have a specific date but C.A. Evans, a Field Worker with the Department of Community and Social Development working in the Resettlement Division of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, visited Pushtrough in the fall of 1968. I have not been able to determine if this was a “cold” call or if it was a part of an organized tour of the South Coast. He left a petition with Mr. William Simms. Eighty percent of Householders had to sign a petition before the Government would discuss resettling a community.

There had been several letters earlier from residents of Pushtrough to various elected officials expressing their views on resettlement and the issues that faced the community.

The South Coast of Newfoundland was seen as one of the most isolated regions of Newfoundland, one of the areas with the greatest lack of public services in the province. Several years earlier, a royal commission had investigated conditions on the South Coast.

25 March 1969

Mr. William Simms of Pushtrough wrote to the Resettlement Division of the Department of Community and Social Development in a letter dated 25 March 1969, asking that 24 forms, or applications for resettlement assistance, be sent to him. He wrote in the letter that “So far quite a number has signed to leave this year. I feel [sic] sure there will be eighty-five percent within a very short time.”

7 April 1969

A public meeting was called to discuss resettlement. Fifteen (15) Householders of 50 in the Pushtrough attended. The official

regulations stated that “A quorum is not less than 50% of the householders)

The following resolutions were passed at the meeting held on 7 April 1969:

1. That we elect WM Simms as Chairman Samuel Kendall Sr. as Secretary, and George Rowse as Member of our local Resettlement Committee.
2. That this Committee be responsible for negotiating with the Director of Fisheries Household Resettlement on our behalf.
3. That this Committee be empowered to circulate a petition and to certify and submit such petition to the Department of Community and Social Development.

The three individuals noted above signed a document, certifying that all information pertaining to the resettlement programme was presented and discussed.



(Credit: Maritime History Archives, Memorial University, PF-328.122)

As a result of the meeting, a Petition was circulated to all Householders in the Community.

NEXT: The Petition