



Fig. 1. Port Union from the north shore of the Catalina Harbour. The fish plant on the far right, the retail store right next to it, and the church were among the buildings rebuilt in 1946, after the fire. Those in the centre are also from 1946, while those on the left are largely from 1916-25, the original period of construction of the town. (Rhona Goodspeed, Historical Services Branch, 1998)

Rhona Goodspeed

Port Union Historic District Port Union, Newfoundland

Port Union is a small town on the south of the Bonavista peninsula beside the Catalina Harbour (figs. 1-3). Dominated by large imposing commercial buildings on the harbour to the west, historic Port Union rises from the water up the hillside of a rocky terrain. The buildings are mainly clustered along the water and to the southwest of the town in places where the land allowed for construction. From the top of the hill, to the northwest, one has a clear view of the harbour, which stretches out to the sea, and its populated meandering coastline, including a part of the larger town of Catalina, to the north. To the east is forest, while to the southwest, facing away from the harbour, fields, trees, and small buildings characterize the landscape. About a mile to the west of that historic section of Port Union, dams and a hydroelectric station, also within the municipal boundaries of the town, were built inland near the Catalina River to provide power to the plant that served old Port Union and adjacent areas (fig. 3).

The proposed historic district includes the section of Port Union located along the Catalina Harbour arranged more or less around a triangle of streets (fig. 4) and, about one mile away, the hydroelectric station on the Catalina River and its associated canal and dams (fig. 5). The number of buildings within the proposed historic area amounts to between 35 and 40.

Port Union was created in 1916 by the Fishermen's Protective Union (FPU), made up of its president William Coaker and members, most of whom were fishermen from the northeast of the Newfoundland coast, working together to achieve common goals leading to an improved way of life. Designed to house the union headquarters, Port Union was an expression of the combined effort of Coaker and the fishermen to achieve commercial independence from the St. John's merchants and to attain a better quality of life. From 1916 to 1925 the town—including commercial buildings and living accommodations—was built and very quickly became a thriving commercial and industrial centre, whose facilities were comparable only to St. John's within Newfoundland. It has continued as a prosperous commercial centre for most of its history. One setback was a fire in 1945, which destroyed a number of buildings, nearly all of which were immediately replaced with similar ones on the same sites. A second fire in 1960 burned the Union Hall, an important structure in

L'arrondissement de Port Union a été reconnu d'importance historique nationale en 1998. Le procès-verbal de la Commission des lieux et monuments historiques du Canada se lit ainsi :

"Port Union is a district of national historic significance because it is an outstanding example of a significant social phenomenon, that of the establishment of a union town noted for its commercial success in the face of aggressive competition from commercial merchants in Newfoundland. The community serves as both a symbol and an expression of the Fishermen's Protective Union and its success in severing, for a time, a centuries-old dependence on Newfoundland merchants.

The town of Port Union is the expression of union president William Coaker's vision backed financially and politically by union members, most of whom were fishermen. The union origins of Port Union are embodied in the site, including the hydro facility, setting, vernacular architecture and plan, which together convey a strong sense of place and history, still readily identifiable with a minimum of intrusive elements."

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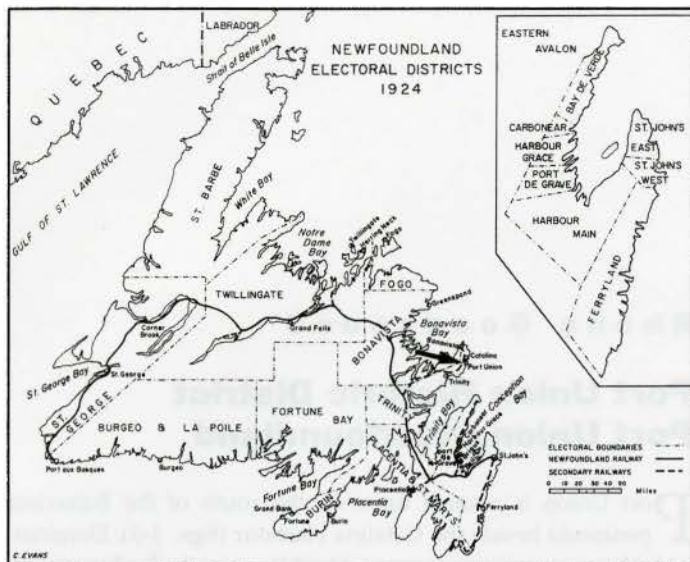


Fig 2. Map with arrow indicating location of Port Union. (McDonald, Ian D.H., 1987, in J. K. Hiller (Ed.), "To Each His Own." *William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925*. St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland, p. 146)

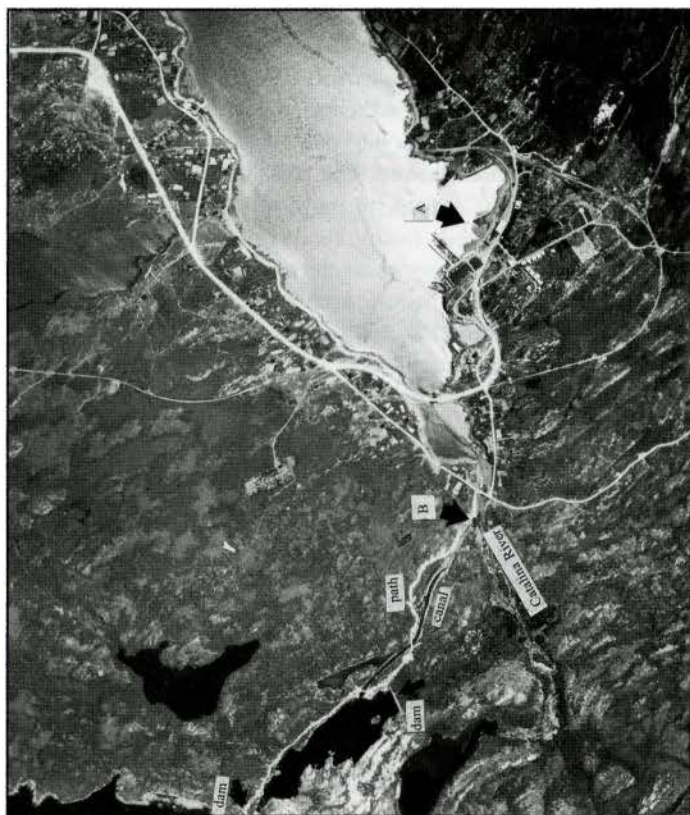


Fig. 3. Aerial view with larger arrows indicating the proposed historic district along the harbour, "A," and near the Catalina River "B." The "B" arrow points directly to the location of the power station. The dams are indicated by the smaller arrows. (Energy Mines and Resources, Air Photo Library, 1951)

the town historically, but one that was never rebuilt, as only remnants of the union organization remained by that time.¹ As a result of the closure of the cod fishery in 1992, many inhabitants have moved away, leaving a large number of buildings vacant. The town is now in a period of transition, as it actively seeks, through the Coaker Foundation, to become a notable centre for tourism.² Two museums, which draw a number of tourists to the

town, are already open in historic Port Union during the summer months. Should the fishery reopen, many of the town's buildings would probably resume functions similar to those which they originally had.

Today historic Port Union, including most of the land and nearly all the buildings, is largely owned by the Union Trading Company, once a thriving commercial venture, but now a real estate holding company controlled by the executors of the Aaron and Ella Bailey Trust, which is responsible for the original Coaker estate.³ The "Bungalow" (Coaker's former residence), the Port Union Museum (the former train station), and the Coaker Monument (his gravesite) are operated by the Port Union Museum Association, partly funded by the trust. Newfoundland Light and Power owns the hydroelectric plant, while the water system above it is located on Crown land.⁴ The Sir William F. Coaker Foundation is hoping to be able to purchase a number of Port Union's historic buildings, as part of an overall plan for tourism for the town. William Coaker, who was recommended for national designation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1985, is commemorated by a plaque located next to his former residence in Port Union. The plaque text reads:

William Coaker founded the Fishermen's Protective Union in 1908 to unite the fishermen, sealers and loggers of rural Newfoundland in order to achieve the goal of the union's motto: "To Each His Own." Under Coaker the union established trading stores, a newspaper and a political party which fought for social and economic reforms. Port Union, the FPU headquarters, was founded in 1916. A member of several governments from 1917, Coaker was a potent force in Newfoundland political life until the mid 1920s. His crusade to remake rural Newfoundland had substantial success and his union survived until 1960.⁵

This paper addresses Port Union in relation to the criteria for historic districts. The first section, concerning historical associations, focuses on the social significance of the phenomenon of the establishment of a union town by describing the circumstances that led to its establishment, its early history, and a description of the buildings originally constructed there. That section concludes with a brief description of its subsequent fate. The integrity of the town is then demonstrated by a brief comment on its plan, followed by a description of the extant resources, including industrial, commercial, domestic, and community facilities. The boundaries of the proposed historic district are then set out, followed by a brief comparison of features within and outside of the district. Following this is an analysis of the architecture in terms of design and materials and

Fig. 4. The section of the proposed historic district along the harbour.
(Department of Natural Resources, Air Photo and Map Library, "Newfoundland & Labrador—Forest Resources and Lands, Topographic series," 2C6-496, 1985, detail, with numbers added)

then a summary of the visual focal points in the town, which create a sense of time and place. The last section deals with comparative examples.

Historical Associations

The Fishermen's Protective Union, headed by president William Coaker and with a membership very largely of fishermen, worked for the creation of Port Union to enable its members to achieve a significantly improved quality of life. Port Union was the union headquarters and the location of the union companies, founded by Coaker with the union's approval, to give the fishermen commercial independence from the St. John's fish merchants.⁶ Port Union, as well as embodying those commercial values, was also developed with the overall welfare of the inhabitants in mind and designed to meet their financial, physical, spiritual, and educational needs. Port Union is a unique example in Canada of a town founded by a union.⁷ According to historian Melvin Baker, "The success of the building of Port Union is a memorial to the determination of Coaker and his supporters and represents a unique development not only in Newfoundland history, but also in the social and commercial history of 20th century Canada."⁸

At the end of the 19th century, most of the commerce of Newfoundland was channelled through St. John's where the majority of the powerful merchants were located. The fishermen were bound to the fish merchants by a credit system that either kept them constantly in debt or prevented them from building up any capital. The merchants were free to adjust the price they paid the fishermen for fish at will, for no apparent reason. The FPU wanted to create a situation in which the fishermen were free of the merchants and the credit system. Coaker argued that clergymen, clerks, lawyers, and merchants received "their own" from society and often more, all at the expense of the fishermen, while the fishermen were unprotected losers. "To each his own," was the union motto. With the cash system, fishermen would save on supplies and be able to accumulate capital, which would bring them a sense of independence and enable them to act in concert to hold back fish for a fair price.⁹

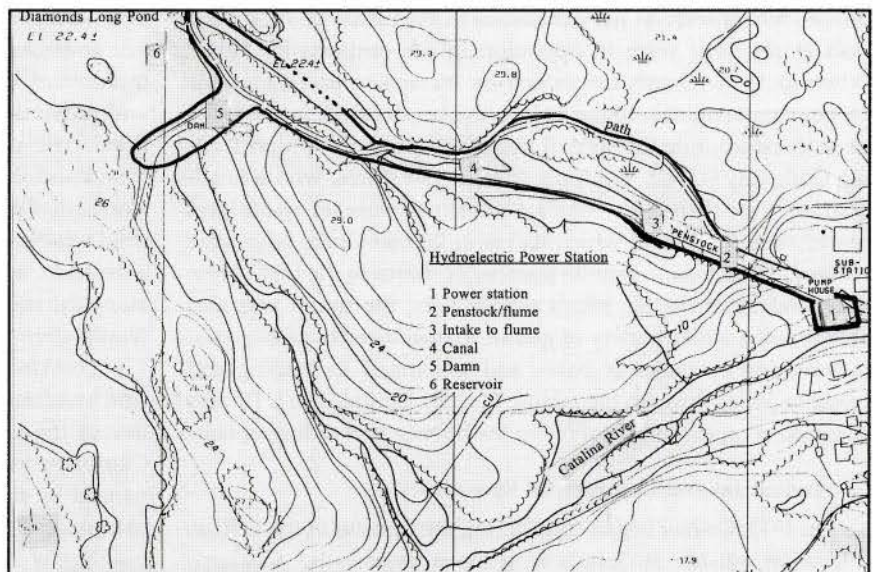
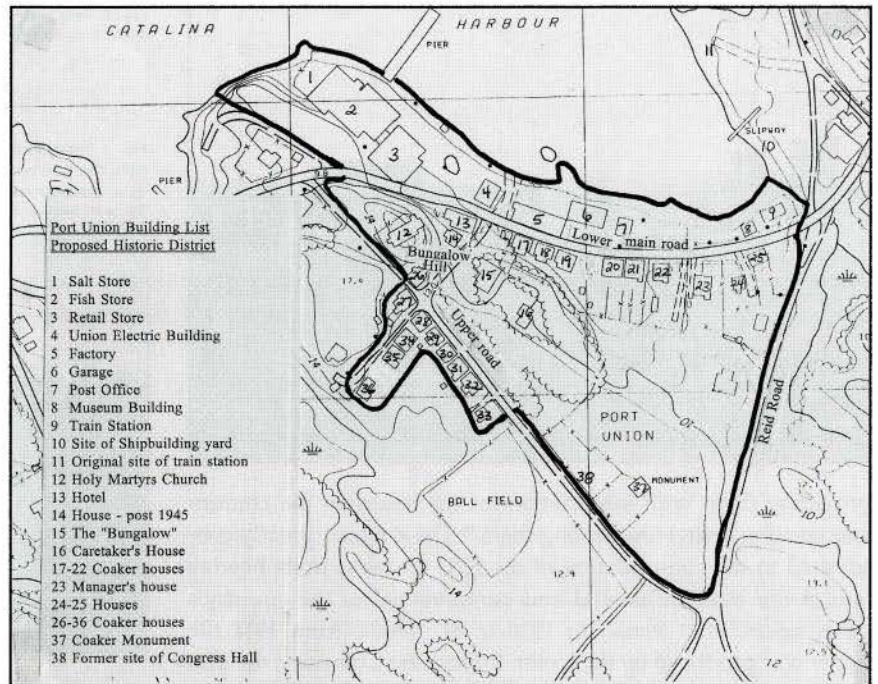


Fig. 5. A section of the proposed historic district including the hydro plant and a portion, including one of the two dams, of the system used for diverting the water towards the penstock and the plant.
(Department of Natural Resources, Air Photo and Map Library, "Newfoundland & Labrador—Forest Resources and Lands, Topographic series," 2C6-496, 1985, detail)

The felt need for such an organization was clearly demonstrated by the union's very rapid growth. While the first local council of the FPU in 1908 had a membership of 19, by 1914, it had grown to 21,060, comprising just over half the fishermen of Newfoundland, organized into 206 councils. Coaker's first two steps in promoting the fishermen's interests were the founding, with the union's approval, of a union newspaper and the establishment of stores where fishermen could purchase merchandise for cash. The newspaper, the *Fishermen's Advocate*, later the *Mail and Advocate*, was a key to the early success of the union, as it enabled Coaker to communicate with the country's fishermen,

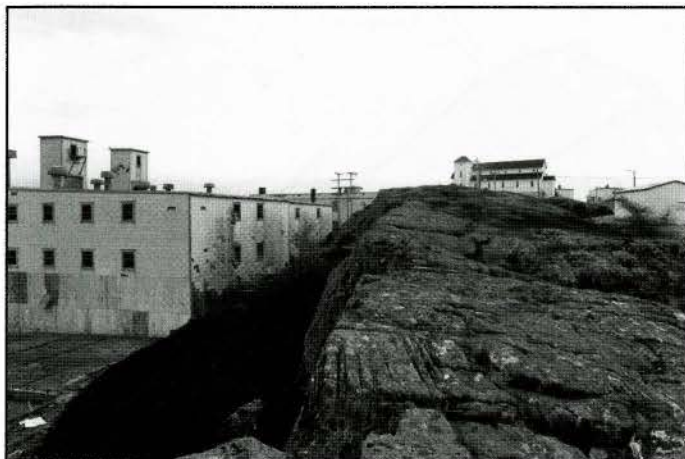


Fig. 6. Rear of the fish plant and the rock formation behind it.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

providing them with information on the affairs of the country and creating a vital link among them.¹⁰ The *Advocate* greatly contributed to the consolidation of the FPU and was in its heyday one of the most influential and controversial of the country's newspapers. First issued in 1910 in St. John's, from 1911 the paper was produced by the Union Publishing Company, the first of five union companies founded by Coaker, with the union's approval, which were to have premises in Port Union.¹¹ As for the cash stores, four were in operation in the outports by 1911.¹² When local merchants responded by increasing profit margins on goods unavailable to the union, Coaker decided, in the same year, to incorporate the second union company, the Union Trading Company (UTC), to supply the outport stores, whose headquarters were then in St. John's. Cash stores were set up for local branches of the union, which had over 200 members who were willing to purchase a definite number of shares in the UTC. Now independent of the St. John's wholesalers, the union was also able to sell a wider variety of goods, to deal directly with manufacturers on a wholesale basis, and to expand its trading and credit facilities through the raising of share capital. The UTC also began to compete in St. John's in the buying and selling of fish.

Industrial and Commercial Facilities

In 1912, Coaker began considering the transfer of the UTC to a location outside St. John's with lower overheads.¹³ Coaker's plans for the formation of another union company to export fish and fishery products directly, so the fishermen could bypass the merchants for their sales, was approved by the annual FPU convention of 1914. With the founding of the Union Export Company, Coaker began to search for premises where he would be free to expand, as the merchants would not allow him to do so in St. John's. Two more union companies were incorporated in 1916: the Union Shipbuilding Company, to make ships for use by the Export Company, and the Union Electric Light and Power Company, to provide electricity to the town.

With the establishment of the Union Export Company to function as an exporter of fishery products, Coaker began to search for premises suitable for the handling, packing, and shipping of fish. He purchased a section of unoccupied land bordering the Catalina Harbour, then located within the town of

Fig. 7. Hydroelectric power station, with the Catalina River on the left and the flume on the right. The road to the immediate right of the flume, becoming a footpath further up, leads to the dams and reservoir higher up.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



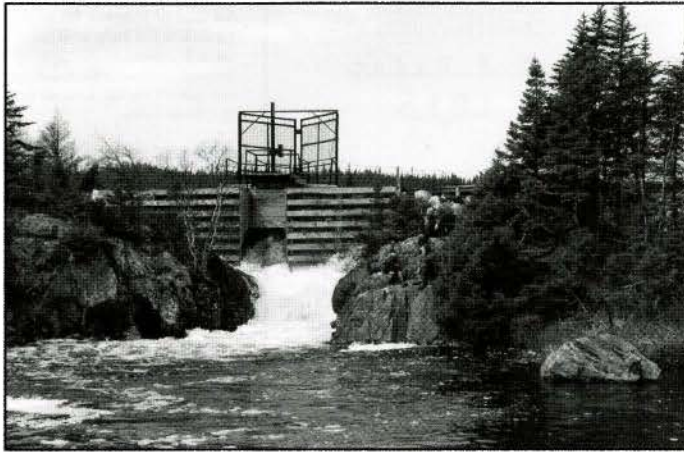
Catalina, to be the location of Port Union, so-named during the FPU annual convention of 1917. Although the site was on a steep hill and marked by huge outcroppings of rock, it met the requirements of having a harbour that was ice-free year-round, and proximity to both a river, which could be harnessed for hydroelectric power, and to the Bonavista branch of the Newfoundland Railway. The harbour was able to accommodate steamers of up to 4,000 or 5,000 tons, and up to as many as a hundred vessels or more at one time at anchorage.¹⁴ Another key consideration was that most FPU members lived in the outports along the northeast coast; the location of the town in their midst would strengthen the union politically.

Port Union was initially built from 1916 to 1925.¹⁵ Among the first buildings to be constructed were the two largest—the premises of the Union Trading Company and of the Union Export Company, located right on the harbour. Those were largely financed by union members who purchased shares in the union companies.¹⁶ For the Export Company, a fish store and a salt store building were constructed, to treat and store fish purchased directly from the fishermen before its export to Europe and elsewhere. On the top floor of the salt store was a cooperage, while the roof of both the fish and salt stores, as well as a huge rock behind it, were used for flakes to dry the fish (fig. 6).¹⁷ Electric driers, blowers, fans, and heaters were also used for fish processing, equipment which contributed to the development of new methods for curing fish. Right next to the fish store, the dry goods department store for the UTC was constructed, which was the headquarters and supply centre for the entire network of outport company stores. The building housed seven distinct departments including retail grocery, dry goods, and hardware departments, as well as offices.¹⁸ Among the facilities in the store were a seal oil plant, a machine shop, a forge, garages, stables, coal sheds, a cold-storage plant, and a boiler house.¹⁹ Also within the building was rental space for both the Export and Union Electric

Fig. 8. Lower Dam.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 9. Upper Dam.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Light and Power companies. From the north side of those buildings, three wharves extended into the harbour for the loading and unloading of cargo. The Union Export Company did not begin operations until 1917, when it moved into its new premises. By the same year, the UTC had become the headquarters for a total of 40 outport cash stores.

The Union Shipbuilding Company premises, built in 1917²⁰ (the site is now vacant), were located some distance and across the shore from the fish plant. The company was founded to build schooners to carry fish overseas, for export by the Union Export Company. The construction of schooners was a revival of an industry in Newfoundland, which had been phased out with the introduction of steamboats. That had resulted in a loss of winter employment for shipbuilders and fishermen, who had formerly cut wood for their manufacture. Coaker decided to revive the industry. The company premises included a mill with electrical machinery for sawing and planing, a workshop, a machine shop and forge, as well as a dockyard large enough to construct three vessels at a time.²¹ During its heyday, from 1918 to the mid-1930s, the Union Shipbuilding Company built 40 vessels for the UTC, some as large as 400 tons and worth \$115,000 each,²² until the business began to decline with the approach of World War II.

The fifth union company, Union Electric Light and Power, was established to provide electricity to Port Union, for electrical equipment and light. The hydroelectric plant, built in 1916-1918,

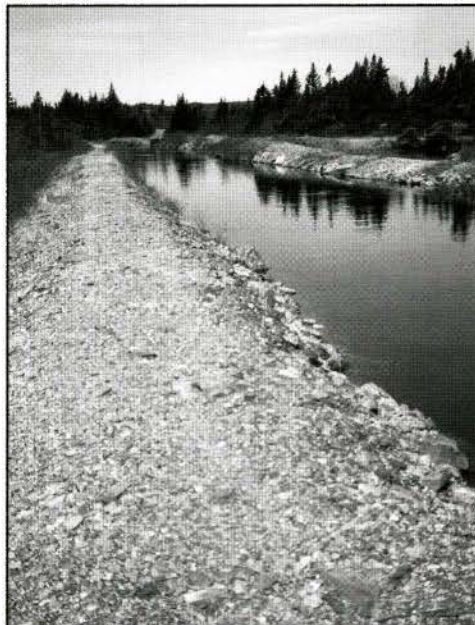


Fig. 10. Section of canal.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

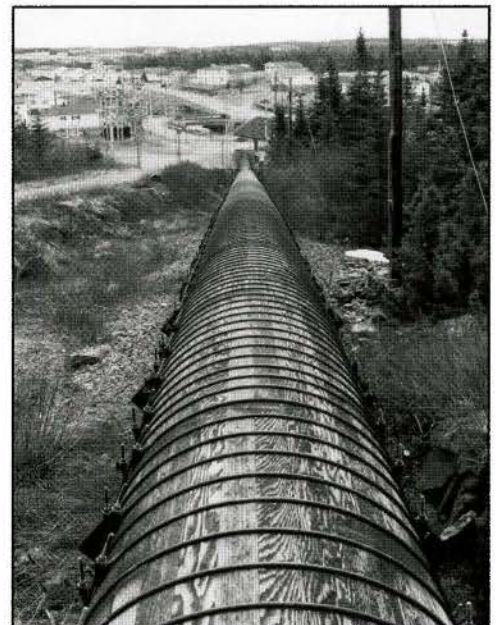


Fig. 11. Detail of flume with power station in the distance below.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

was located inland beside the Catalina River and about one mile west of the other union company buildings along the harbour (figs. 3 and 7). Two dams were constructed to harness water from the river and divert it from Diamonds Long and Gull ponds to create a reservoir (figs 8-9). A canal 1,000 feet long was constructed, largely through solid rock, to convey the water from the reservoir to the top of the hill overlooking the powerhouse (figs. 10-11). There the water entered the penstock or flume, a large wooden pipe, which conveyed it to the powerhouse.²³ In 1918, the Electric Company began providing electricity for the shipyard, the fish store, and the department store, and for houses in both Port Union and Catalina. That represented the earliest

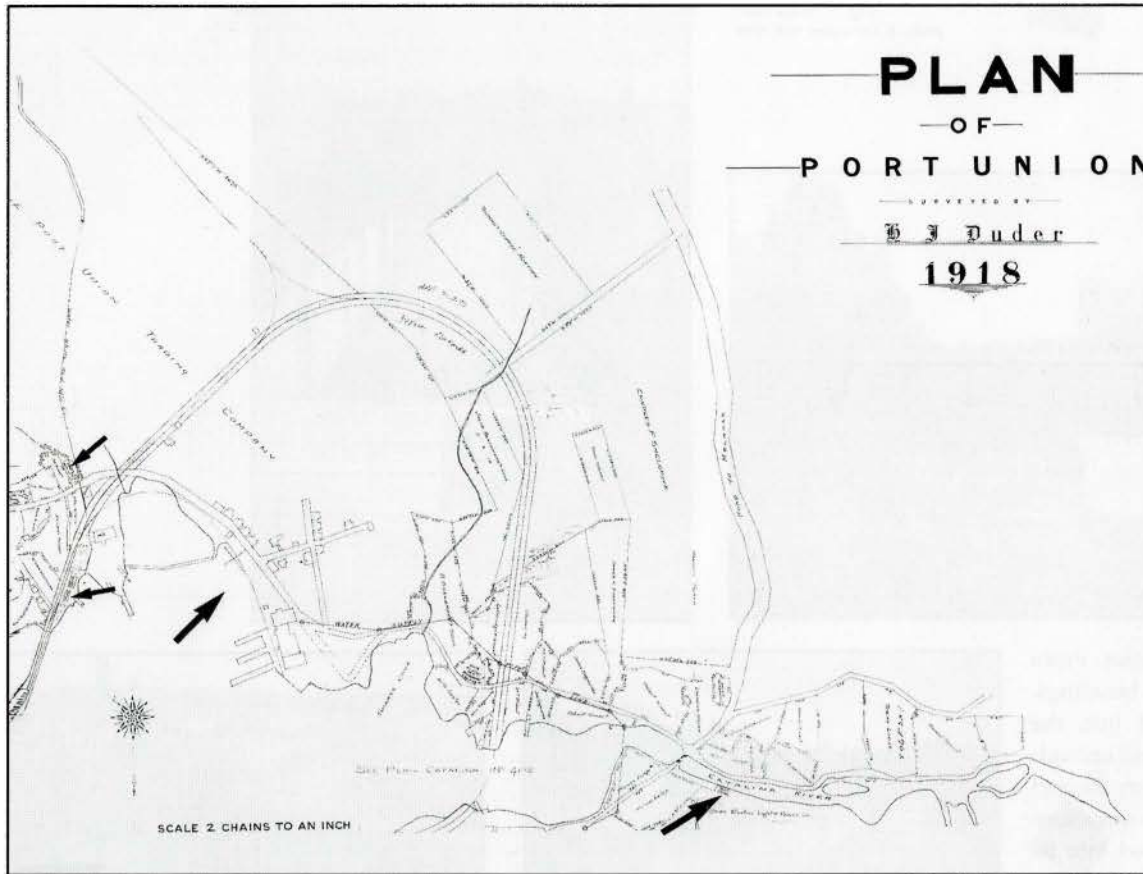


Fig. 12. Detail of early plan of Port Union, with two arrows indicating the location of the proposed historic district. The two small arrows on the far left indicate the original location of the school (above) and the train station (below). Also visible are the spur (U-shaped), the UTC Land, and the early arrangement of streets. (Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, no. 690, surveyed by H. J. Duder, 1918)

Domestic and Community Facilities

While the union companies answered the fishermen's need for commercial independence, Coaker, fully committed to their welfare, making sure that the town's inhabitants had their other needs met as well. To address his concern that there be adequate housing, 50 "dwelling houses" were built from 1917 to 1925,²⁵ all rental properties, were

attempt to bring electricity to the outports in Newfoundland and the first such attempt during the period before Confederation. In 1920, the company installed a second 400 horsepower generator at the Port Union station to provide electricity for the nearby communities of Elliston and Bonavista.

Port Union also had a railway, though it did not belong to a union company. For land transportation, a spur railway to Port Union from the Bonavista Branch Line at the Catalina station was built in 1916 (fig. 12). The spur ran along the east side of the town behind the shipbuilding plant, out onto a pier extending 350 feet from the eastern shore. Another set of tracks joined that section of the shore to the waterfront in the front of the UTC and the fish plant and salt store, to facilitate the transportation of goods. Hundreds of thousands of quintals (a unit for weighing fish, equalling 112 pounds) of salt codfish passed through the station from Bonavista and Elliston for shipment to salt fish markets around the world in the first half of the century. Trains also bought general provisions to the station for loading on boats and distributing to people living along the coast. The train station, built in 1917, and freight sheds as well as a fresh water supply for steamers were located on the east shore (figs. 13).²⁴

Once the town had become well established, the Union Publishing Company moved the production of the union newspaper, the *Mail and Advocate*, from St. John's to Port Union. From 1923, it occupied a portion of a large woodworking factory building, constructed in the same year (fig. 14).

nearly all duplexes (two "dwelling houses" per unit). They were located near and above the commercial buildings (figs. 15-18). In a few instances, Coaker sold lots to those who wished to construct their own houses; always with the stipulation that if the house were sold, it would be returned to the UTC, thus remaining in the hands of a union company and ensuring the identity of the union town. The houses were designed with some differentiation based on income; for example, while all were provided with running water and electricity, those along the lower, main road, had plumbing as well.²⁶ All exhibited desirable features within the context of Newfoundland outport standards, and provided concrete evidence of the concern Coaker had for his workers. Fully committed to independence, the union had its own woodworking factory built along the shore in 1923 to make doors and sashes for the houses (the same building which simultaneously housed the publication of the *Mail and Advocate*; fig. 14).²⁷

Several other somewhat larger houses, single-family dwellings, were built for individuals with some standing in the town. For example, a house for the manager of the Union Trading Company was built, probably in 1916 (fig. 19),²⁸ and one of similar size was built for the stationmaster, probably around 1916-18 (fig. 5).²⁹ The original occupant of a third house, also of similar size and from the initial period of the construction of the town (1916-1925), remains unidentified (fig. 20).

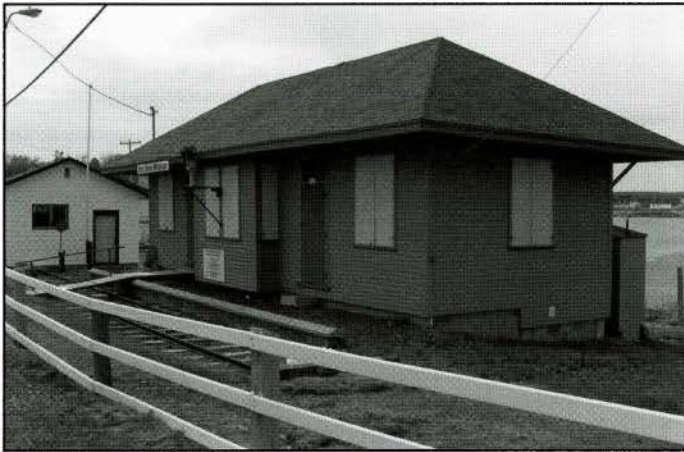


Fig. 13. Train station, moved from its original site, now a museum.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

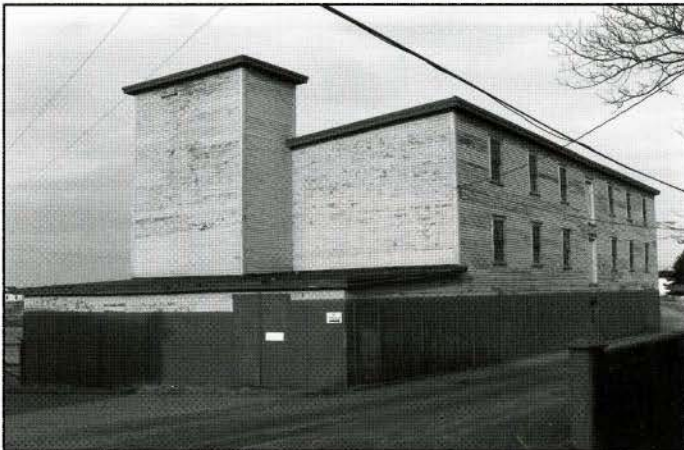


Fig. 14. The factory, built in 1923.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

Coaker's office and place of residence were located in the "Bungalow," built for him in 1917 with money raised by the workers (fig. 21).³⁰ With its somewhat more elaborate design than the other residences in the town and its large fenced-in property, it reflected the role Coaker held as president of the union and of the union companies, though it was nevertheless a modest home for an individual of his standing. It was there that Coaker held meetings with fishermen, skippers, and delegates to discuss upcoming conventions or decide on policy before union meetings.³¹ A monumental gravesite was constructed for Coaker in the town after his death in 1938 and designed with his wishes in mind (figs. 22-23).

While the union companies and the houses took care of the worker's needs for commercial independence and accommodation, other facilities provided for their spiritual and educational needs. To provide for religious expression, Coaker made sure that churches representing three denominations were easily accessible. Catalina already had Methodist and Roman Catholic churches, which could easily serve Port Union residents, however, the Anglican church building was very inconveniently located. Coaker therefore chose an Anglican church for Port Union. Holy Martyrs Anglican Church, dramatically sited on a huge



Fig. 15. View to the east of some of the houses along the lower, main street. The two in the distance originally had bay windows, while the vacant lot between two houses was previously the site of a duplex. On the right is the very edge of the front of the Coaker property.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 17. Some of the same houses as in the previous illustration, closer up, along the upper streetscape, facing east.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 16. View facing east along the upper road, showing the duplexes. The one on the right was built by a private individual. The intersection of that road with the one running southwest may be seen next to the first set of duplexes, 1997.
(Ray Troke, Heritage Planner)



Fig. 18. View facing north towards Bungalow Hill, showing two of the three remaining houses on the right, or east side of the street. The rear of one of the duplexes along the upper street is visible on the left. The space on the right was the site of a now demolished house.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

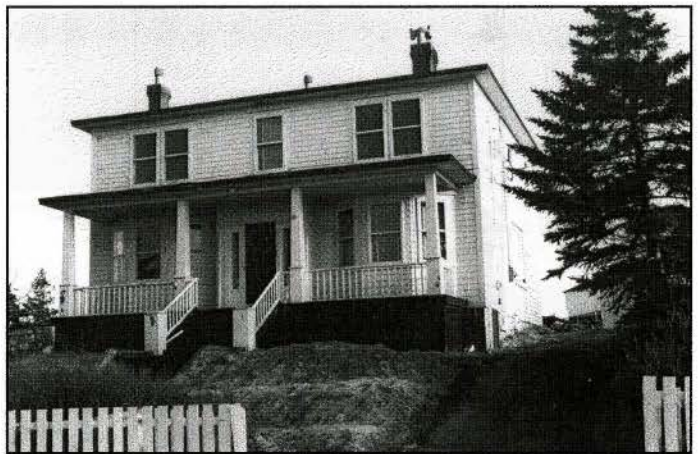


Fig. 19. House of the manager of the Union Trading Company, probably built in 1916.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

outcropping of rock overlooking the harbour, was built in 1919-20 (see fig. 1).³² Conceived as a memorial church for 12 "Coaker recruits" whose lives were taken during World War I, the church was decorated with a series of 12 commemorative stained glass windows.

Port Union also had its own school (not extant), about which little is known other than that early on it seems to have been located on the east side of the railway tracks, as indicated in a plan of 1918 (fig. 12). A number of other facilities are known to have existed but their original whereabouts are unidentified. A night school was also organized for union members, where they learned navigation for overseas travel. (It is possible that it was held in the UTC store, which housed office space and rental

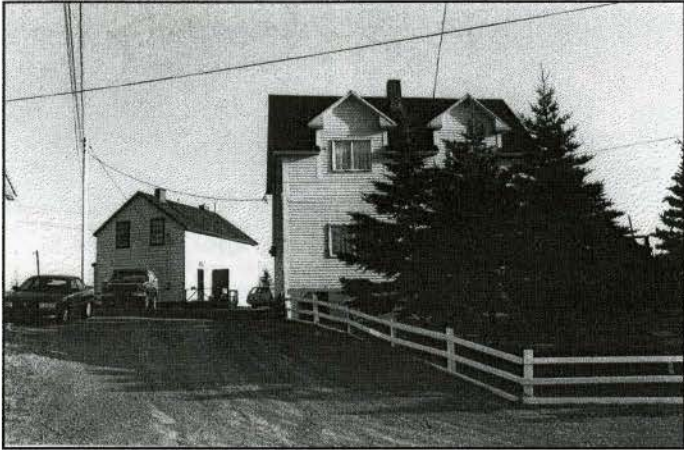


Fig. 20. Two houses from the early period of the construction of the town, including the stationmaster's house on the left.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 23. Detail of Coaker Monument, bust of Coaker and tomb, recent view looking east.
(Photo: Ray Troke, 1997)

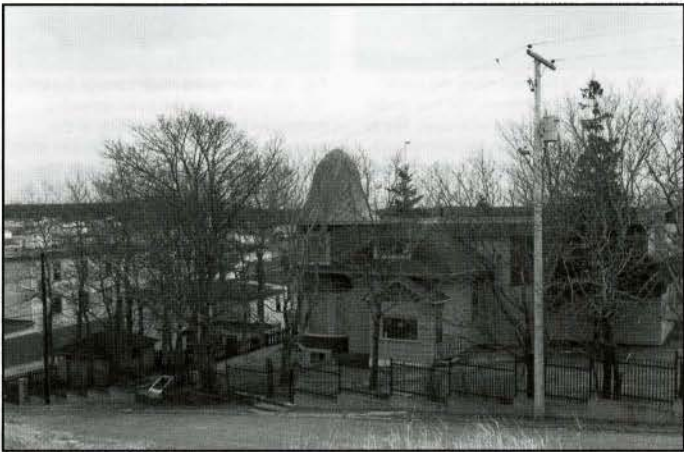


Fig. 21. The "Bungalow" today, showing the original metal fence along the front of the property up Bungalow Hill and the location of the HSMBC plaque.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 24. Former post office, now the offices of the Sir William F. Coaker Heritage Foundation, date of construction unknown.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 22. The Coaker Monument with the bust of William Coaker in the centre distance.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 25. Retail store on the left, fish plant on the right, and above Holy Martyrs Anglican Church, all built in 1946.
(Photo: Ray Troke, Heritage Planner, ca. 1997)



Fig. 27. Holy Martyrs Anglican Church, front (south) elevation.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 26. From left to right: the hotel, the foundations of the temperance bar; above, rear of a duplex on the upper street and Holy Martyrs Anglican Church.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 28. Former Union Electric Light and Power Building with its original canopy removed, built in 1946.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

facilities for the Export and Electric Light and Power companies.) Coaker also had a community health nurse brought over from England.³³ A concern for the sobriety of the workers was displayed by the construction of a facility for the manufacture of temperance drinks in the centre of the town. Coaker also had the Government establish several public buildings, such as a customs house and postal and telegraph offices, and make Port Union a regular port of call for its coastal steamer service. Little is known about those public buildings, though a post office of unknown date is extant along the harbour (fig. 24). Other facilities in the town included a bakery and, for entertainment, a movie theatre, apparently located in Congress Hall from 1925.³⁴

Congress Hall, the large union hall and location for the FPU's annual conventions, was built in 1924-25 with funds provided by the Union, UTC employees, and friends of the FPU. From 1918, union conventions were held in Port Union, and from 1925 (Coaker's last year as president), they were held in Congress Hall. Every year, over 200 delegates attended. Sited on the hill overlooking the harbour, the hall housed the convention centre on the upper floor, while a community hall was located on the ground floor. Lighted up at night "with hundreds of electric lights, inside and outside..." the building was visible from miles at sea and was described at the time as "a beacon of unity for the fishermen."³⁵ Because of its strong associations with the union, it is unfortunate that when the building burned in 1960, it was never replaced. A hotel was also constructed in Port Union, in about 1916, to provide accommodation to visitors and delegates who attended the annual FPU conventions, for UTC managers from the outports who came to arrange for supplies for outport stores or provide reports, and for fish traders from around the world.

Port Union's Heyday (1918-1925)

According to Coaker, no other town in Newfoundland had equivalent facilities at the time of construction.³⁶ By 1919, there were about 400 persons in the Port Union-Catalina area employed by the union operations in Port Union. By 1921, Port Union had a population of 532, which included residents who had originally lived in the Port Union section of Catalina, or who had moved there from Catalina and other parts of Newfoundland.³⁷ In 1922, total investment in the Trading Company and affiliated concerns by members of the union, non-members, and others amounted to one million dollars.³⁸ It was calculated that in the late 1920s, the UTC was carrying over 5,000 fishing accounts, covering some 1,000 fishermen and sponsoring a five-vessel sealing fleet.³⁹ Those early years were Port Union's heyday when it

was a thriving community and the union was at its most influential. The construction of the town from 1916 to 1925 represented, in historian John Feltham's words, "the high watermark of Union accomplishment."⁴⁰ By the time of Coaker's retirement from the presidency in 1926, the Fishermen's Protective Union was however markedly in decline.⁴¹

Subsequent History

The town nevertheless continued as a busy commercial and industrial centre for many more decades. The large fire in 1945 in the northwest section of the town did not halt business for long. Although a number of buildings were destroyed, including the fish plant, the retail store, the church, the hotel, and at least one duplex, all but the duplex were immediately replaced with similar buildings on the same sites, and businesses resumed functioning in the new buildings the following year (figs. 25-26).⁴² The church was replaced with a new building in the same style and new stained glass windows commissioned from the original company, commemorated the same recruits (fig. 27). Union Electric Light and Power, prior to the fire, had rented facilities within the UTC retail store; afterwards, in 1946, it had a new building constructed nearby (fig. 28).

By the mid-1950s, the Trading Company was reputedly one of the east coast's largest exporters of dried cod, which was by then a dying trade. Union Light and Power expanded in the 1950s with the purchase of Clarenville Light and Power, to bring electricity to the whole of the Bonavista peninsula. In 1966, the company amalgamated with four other electric utilities to form Newfoundland Light & Power Co. Limited. The shipbuilding industry, which went into decline in the late 1930s, was revived at the same site from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. The UTC retail store continued to serve the entire region until it was forced into receivership in 1977.⁴³ By 1979, the fish plant was occupied by Canada's Salt Fish Corporation.⁴⁴ During those years, Port Union, though its population always remained small,⁴⁵ continued as a busy fishing centre and maintained a higher level of employment than other towns in Newfoundland.⁴⁶ Not until 1980 did the *Advocate* cease production,⁴⁷ after having enjoyed a 70-year history.

Despite ups and downs, Port Union continued to survive until the closure of the fishery in 1992, which had a devastating effect on the town, as it had throughout the outports. As a result, many people have left Port Union in search of employment. That led to the vacating of about two-thirds of the buildings in old Port Union, particularly the commercial and industrial structures, though some of the houses are still occupied. In an attempt



Fig. 29. Fish plant from the wharf.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 30. Retail store from the southeast.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

to create a source of revenue for the town and to bring alive Port Union's remarkable past, the former train station has been transformed into a museum, as has the Coaker "Bungalow," which is open to the public in accordance with Coaker's wishes. The Coaker gravesite is open to the public as well. The Sir William F. Coaker Foundation is also actively seeking ways to promote tourism in Port Union. It is hoped that those measures succeed in drawing numerous tourists to the area, and help to bring to life the great sense of history that is a part of Port Union.

The Integrity of the Proposed Historic District of Port Union

Plan

The proposed historic district of Port Union is made up of two distinct areas: the area beside the harbour and the hydroelectric plant along the Catalina River and its associated canal and dams. Within the area beside the harbour, the original V-Shaped layout of the streets was dictated by the shoreline and the rocky terrain (fig. 12). The road by the harbour, there before the town was built, intersected with the original spur. Today the streets of old Port Union are joined in a triangle, made up the original "V," and a third road, called Reid Road, which follows the line of the old spur and joins the other two sides of the trian-

gle (fig. 4). (That is the only street in the town to have an official name, after the Reid Newfoundland Company, builder of the railway.⁴⁸) As a comparison between the 1918 survey and a recent map illustrates, the original rudimentary plan with its component parts remains clearly visible today (compare figs. 4 and 12).

Extant Resources

Altogether there are between 35 and 40 buildings in old Port Union. Nearly all of these were built during the initial period of construction of the town, from 1916 to 1925, or immediately after the fire in 1946. Those destroyed in the 1945 fire, all in the northwest section of the town, were (with the exception of one duplex) replaced with similar buildings on the original sites having the same functions.

The industrial and commercial facilities—the fish plant (1946, fig. 29), one of whose wharves is intact;⁴⁹ the retail store (1946; fig. 30); the hydroelectric building (1946, fig. 28); and the factory (1923, fig. 14)—are right next to the water along the lower main street, clustered to the west. The hotel (1946, fig. 26) is across from the hydro building. On the same side of the street as the hotel are residential buildings—duplexes (1916-25, fig. 15) near the west and single family residences (1916-25) to the east near Reid Road, including the UTC manager's house (probably 1916, figs. 19 and 31). Further along the street to the east, also on the waterfront, are the former post office (date unknown, fig. 24) and the former train station (1916, figs. 13 and 31). To the north, along Reid Road, is the stationmaster's house (probably ca. 1916-18, fig. 20).

The property of the "Bungalow" fronts on the lower main street across from the factory, stretches up Bungalow Hill to the upper street and continues some distance to the east, forming a large, approximately rectangular area (figs. 4, 21, and 32). The Coaker mansion, as it is sometimes called (1917), is near the top of the hill (fig. 21). To the west above the retail store, on the upper street, is the Anglican church (1946, figs. 1 and 27). To the west of the church at the top of Bungalow Hill are more duplexes (1916-25, figs. 16-17 and 33). A few more, smaller houses for the workers built from 1916 to 1925, are a little further south, on the street at right angles to the upper road (fig. 18). Further along the upper road to the southeast is the Coaker Monument (ca. 1938, figs. 22-23 and 32).

Except for the train station (1916, fig. 13), all the extant buildings from the initial period of construction of the town are in their original locations. The station's original site along the northeastern shore is marked by a curb (figs. 4 and 34). The original buildings which have been lost include Congress Hall (1924-

Fig. 31. View of district to the east seen from shore where the shipyard and train station were once located. The rear of the station (left, now a museum), the stationmaster's house, and the UTC manager's house are visible. Next to the station is a small newly constructed building which is part of the museum.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

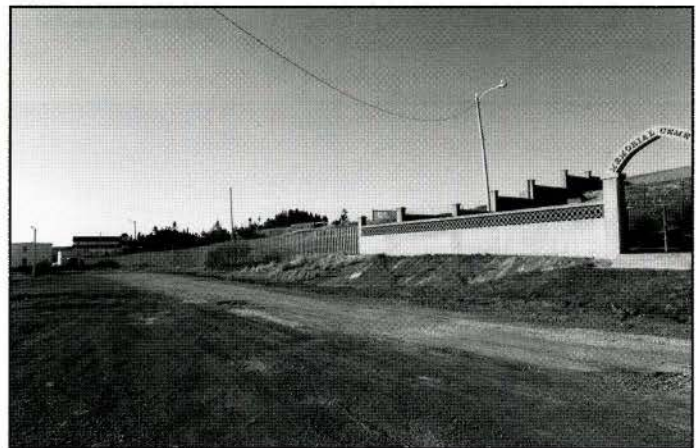


Fig. 32. View to the west along the upper street with Holy Martyrs Anglican Church and duplexes in the distance. On the right, the wooden fence along the "Bungalow" property and other, vacant property, as well as a section of the front wall of the Coaker Monument. Congress Hall (not extant) was located to the left of the monument, facing onto that street.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

25), whose site at the top of the hill has remained vacant (fig. 32);⁵⁰ the premises of the Union Shipbuilding Company, which is represented by two large artifacts on its original site on the northeastern shore (figs. 35-36);⁵¹ the salt fish store (1946), of which only the foundations remain (fig. 37); and the plant for temperance drinks (probably 1946), whose foundations are next to the hotel (fig. 26). Several duplexes have also been demolished (figs. 15 and 18), leaving empty sites,⁵² and a certain number of small unidentified structures also appear to be lost. The large empty area between the lower and upper streets characterized by rocks and low shrubs, has always been vacant (fig. 38).

There are very few buildings in old Port Union that were added during a later period. Those include two small houses on Bungalow Hill: one opposite the Coaker property built sometime after the 1945 fire (fig. 39) and another, of very recent date, on the Coaker property, hidden behind trees (fig. 40). Another house along Reid Road is of uncertain date (fig. 41). Along the waterfront is a garage (built in the 1950s, fig. 42), just east of the factory.

The hydroelectric plant and its associated flume (1916-18, fig. 7) are in its original location by the Catalina River and the recently constructed shed stands on the site of the original one. Above, behind, and to the east of the plant are the original canal, two dams and the reservoir that power the plant (figs. 3, 5, and 8-10). A path runs along the north of the canal before it crosses over to the south at a point below the lower dam at Diamonds Long Pond (figs. 5 and 7). The path follows the alignment of the original means of access to the site in use in Coaker's days.⁵³ After it rises above the level of the dams, the path again follows the north side of the waterway until it reaches the upper dam. That part of Port Union appears to have remained almost unchanged.

Proposed Boundaries

The boundaries of the first area are clearly legible due to their arrangement around the triangle of streets; they are reinforced by topographical features and by visual differences inside and outside the district (fig. 4).

The proposed historic district on the harbour may be easily identified by its general arrangement of buildings around a triangle of streets: the lower main road, Reid Road, and the upper road (fig. 4). The northern boundary is formed by the shoreline and includes the wharf in front of the fish plant (figs. 1, 4, and 37). The eastern boundary is identified by Reid Road, the original line of a section of the railway tracks (figs. 4, 12, and 43). Nearly all the southwestern boundary is formed by the upper

road itself but is extended outward to include the houses on the opposite, southwest side of the road. The boundary continues along the upper road to the north where it intersects the lower main road (figs. 4 and 44). At that point the boundary becomes a small section of a dirt road continuing northwest, chosen as it allows for the inclusion within the proposed district of the enormous rock just north of it, which was used for drying fish (figs. 4 and 45).

Complementary to that first area is the vacant stretch of shoreline just north of the proposed district, which was once the site of the train station and related buildings, and of the premises of the Union Shipbuilding Company (figs. 4 and 35). That area forms an integral part of the story of Port Union, with the two huge artifacts and bits of scattered equipment representing the shipbuilding plant and the curb indicating the original location of the station (figs. 4, 34, and 36). There, the road running parallel to the shoreline is a continuation of Reid Road and follows a segment of the line of original railway tracks (figs. 4, 34, and 43).

The character within the first area of the proposed district is defined by its plan, which is seen in the siting of functionally related buildings, including the focal points of the fish plant and

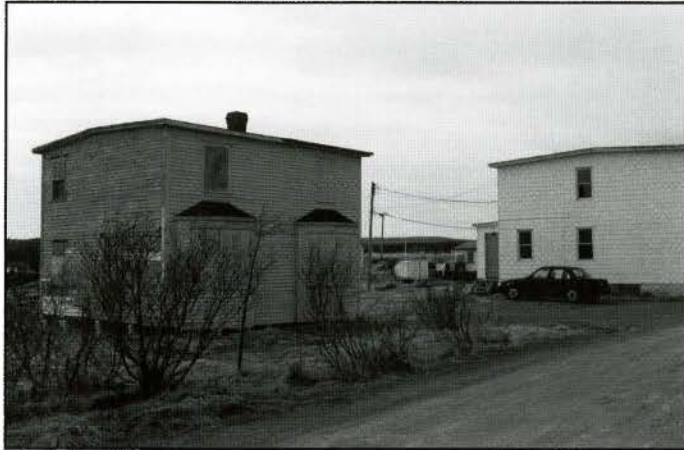


Fig. 33. House (left) on the upper street built between 1916 and 1925 by a private individual on land purchased from the Union Trading Company.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

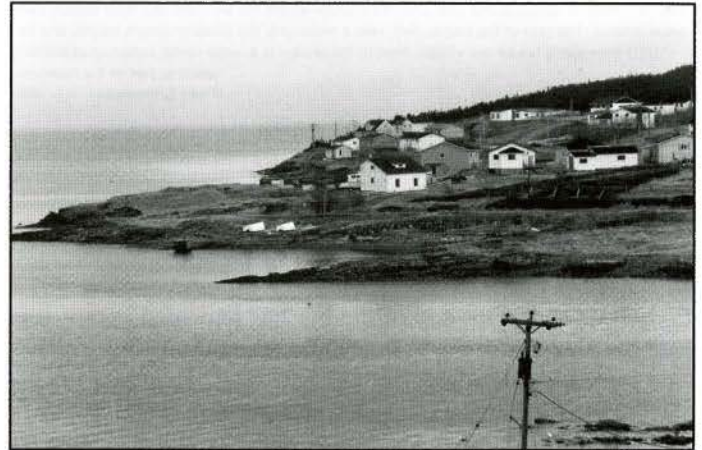


Fig. 35. Vacant stretch of shoreline where the shipbuilding yard was located, on the right, and the railway station, on the left.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 34. Curb along road, where railway once stood, facing north. The road follows the original line of the railway.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

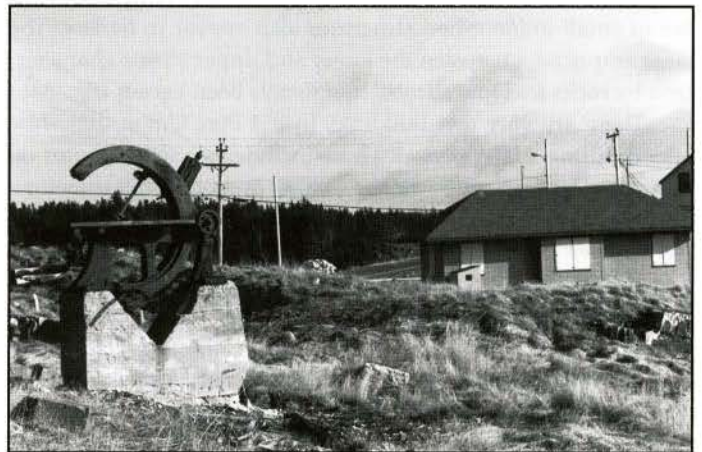


Fig. 36. Detail of huge artifact from the former shipbuilding yard.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

retail store, and particularly the duplexes (a building type rarely seen in the outports), which are nearly all very similar in appearance and scale. The buildings are regularly spaced, close together, near the street and aligned more or less parallel with each other, all features that reinforce the plan of the whole and speak to the union town (fig. 4). The entrance to the district on the northwest is clearly marked by two huge outcroppings of rock (figs. 4 and 49). Outside the district on the east, on the opposite side of Reid Road, the area is defined by forest (figs. 4), while to the south it is defined by the ball field and institutional buildings (outside the district, figs. 4 and 46), as well as the fields behind the houses (figs. 4 and 47).

The proposed boundaries of the second area of the proposed district, where the former Union Electric hydroelectric plant is located, are those of the lot on which the building, the flume or penstock, and the shed above it are situated (figs. 5 and 7). The building is set apart from its surroundings by the river, a metal fence and a road. Also included within that section of the district are the canal and the two dams, components of the water system which provided power to the plant and which continue to do so (figs. 5 and 8-10), and the alignment of the path which provided

and continues to provide access to the features of the site (fig. 5). The components above the powerhouse are clearly set apart from their environment, made up as it is of uncultivated plants, shrubs and forest.

Architecture: Design and Materials

The buildings of Port Union are mostly characterized by their wood frame construction, by their vernacular and functional appearance, and by their sense of classical scale and proportions. With the exception of the two large commercial structures, the buildings are generally of rectilinear plan, two storeys in height, and covered in siding of either wood or more modern materials. The roofs are gabled or sloped. The source of the domestic buildings is British classicism, while the two commercial buildings are functional in design. Nevertheless, both share a classical sense of scale and proportions. In addition, their sharing of compatible colour schemes (including yellow, blue and white) is characteristic of the outports.

Significant features of the town are the duplexes, a rare building type in outport Newfoundland. Those two-storey buildings combine vernacular features with a pattern on the



Fig. 37. Side elevation of fish plant with the foundations of the salt store on the left.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)



Fig. 40. Caretaker's house, beside the "Bungalow," ca. 1995-96.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 38. View of area within triangle of streets, looking northwest. The union hall would have been located on the left. The rear of some of the duplexes is visible on the right.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

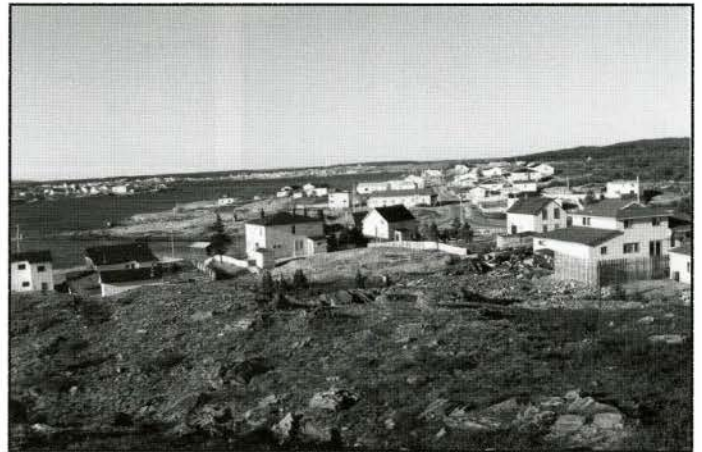


Fig. 41. View to the northeast showing the intersection of Reid Road and the lower, main road in the distance. The large white house on the right may be a transformed Coaker house.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

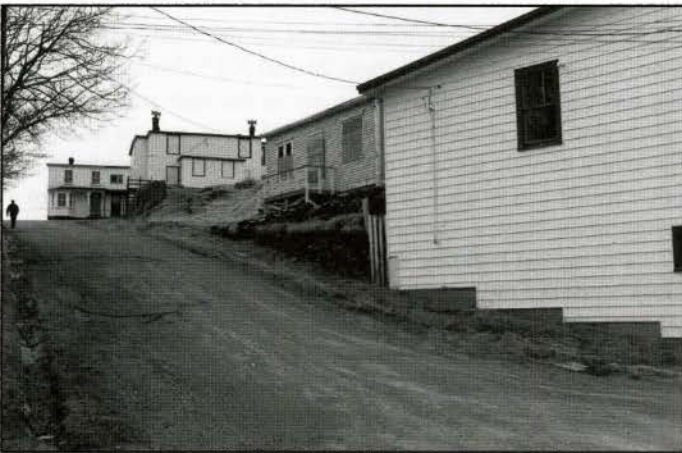


Fig. 39. View up Bungalow Hill, showing a corner of the hotel on the right, a small house which may be on the site of the original burned duplex above it, and duplexes in the distance.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



Fig. 42. View along main street, facing west, showing the side elevation of the factory, the 1930s garage and, on the far right, the former post office.
(Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

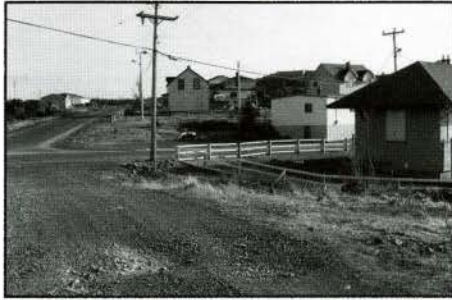


Fig. 43. View along Reid Road, the eastern boundary of the district, where it intersects with the lower main road. The stationmaster's house is in the centre and the station on the far right.

(Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)

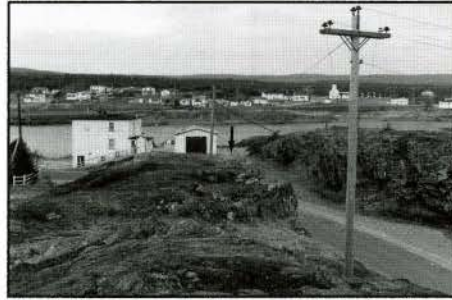


Fig. 45. View to the west with an arrow indicating the dirt road. None of the buildings in the photo is within the proposed district.

(Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)



Fig. 47. Fields behind the houses above Bungalow Hill. The duplexes on the right are on the southwest side of the upper street.

(Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)



Fig. 44. View facing east, from the intersection of the lower main and upper roads, with the church and a duplex on the right, and the UTC retail store on the left.

(Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)



Fig. 46. Upper road facing east, with area outside proposed district on the right.

(Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)

The factory, the only extant commercial building to have survived from the original period of the town's construction (fig. 14), retains its original wood siding and almost certainly possesses the oldest extant elevator shaft in Newfoundland's outports. The rebuilt commercial structures have largely retained the functional designs of the buildings that they replaced and are compatible with the rest of the buildings in the town. Both the fish plant and the retail store are covered with cedar-grained asbestos shingles, conventional

materials during the 1940s and 1950s (figs. 29-30). Coaker's residence is lent some distinction by its design based on a vernacular interpretation of a historical revival style (fig. 53). Its asymmetrical design, corner tower, irregular roofline with dormers, and projecting porch are features of the Queen Anne style, while the bell-shaped roof over the tower and the simplified design suggest the vernacular for origins. Like most Queen Anne-style houses in the Atlantic Provinces, it is built of wood. The property is entirely surrounded by a fence, made up of the original metal fence, to the west, and a picket fence along the other sides (figs. 21 and 32).⁵⁵ Though the building has been altered with additions to the east and south and newly clad with aluminium siding,⁵⁶ it largely retains its character. While its style sets it somewhat apart from the duplexes and other residences in the town, it nevertheless is similar to them in proportions, scale, and materials.

The second building designed in a historical revival style is Holy Martyrs Anglican Church, a small structure built in 1946 in an attractive Gothic Revival style similar to that of the original church of 1916 (fig. 27). The building lacks its original steeple,⁵⁷ and the new vinyl siding detracts somewhat from its appearance but does not by any means destroy its character. The building is compatible in scale, design, and material with its neighbours.

The Coaker Monument, on the southeastern corner of the proposed district, is a gravesite remarkable for its size and its monumental design, especially within the context of outport Newfoundland (figs. 22-23). The designer is unidentified, though it is known that Coaker wished to be buried in Port Union, that he chose that site at the top of the hill and that he

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Fig. 48. View to the north, with an arrow indicating the entrance to the district between the two rocks. In the foreground is the upper road, while the tops of the elevator shafts of the fish plant are visible behind the huge rock. (Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)



Fig. 49. A duplex from the lower main street with few alterations. (Photo: R. Goodspeed, 1998)



Fig. 50. A duplex from the upper street with no alterations. (Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

took an interest in the monument before his death. The monument, a bronze portrait bust placed above his marble tomb set on a marble platform, is Italianate in materials and design. The bust was made for Coaker in Naples before his death in 1934 and may have been one of a number of gifts of works of art he received from people he met during his travels to Europe.⁵⁸ A low Italianate parapet once surrounded the platform but was removed some years ago. A manicured lawn surrounds the platform, and a path and stairs rise from the entrance to the cemetery along the road, up to the monument. The whole area is set apart from the rest of the town by a concrete fence, which replaced an earlier similar fence some years ago enclosing an even larger space.⁵⁹ Coaker's bust faces away from the historic town and the harbour, towards the northeast and the Avalon Peninsula, where most of the union members once resided.⁶⁰

The biggest intrusion into the historic town is the garage built in the 1950s (fig. 42). While compatible in scale with the other buildings, its corrugated metal walls detract a little from the homogeneity of the proposed district. The newest addition, a small one-storey house for a caretaker very recently built on the Coaker property, is similar in design and scale to the other buildings and is hidden by a cluster of trees (fig. 40).

The buildings in Port Union are largely in good condition, with the exception of the factory which requires stabilization and whose original elevator shaft has collapsed.⁶¹ Those that are inhabited or in use, mostly in the northeast section of the district, are in good condition and appear well maintained. Those that are vacant tend to be boarded up, and the fish plant and retail store exhibit a few signs of neglect and vandalism, such as broken windows and missing shingles. The fish plant has recently been undergoing some improvement.⁶² Restoration plans have been developed for some of the buildings, including the factory.⁶³ Apart from the factory, the buildings are structurally sound.⁶⁴

The hydroelectric powerhouse, in the second section of the proposed district, is a one-storey building, of similar scale and proportions to the others, but built of concrete with a gabled wood roof, reflective of its functional design (fig. 7).⁶⁵ At the rear, the flume or penstock, built of wooden staves, feeds water into the plant. The intake to the penstock has a concrete wall, and a gate with guides and a hoist; it is covered with a small woodshed of recent construction, compatible with the structure as a whole. Sixty-five percent of the canal was built through solid rock, while

the remainder is earth and fill. In excellent condition and slightly enlarged, the building is still in operation using a majority of the original equipment with the addition of diesel generators in 1945 and 1961.⁶⁶



Fig. 51. The most altered of all the Coaker houses. (Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)

Sense of Time and Place

Because of its largely abandoned state, characterized by a marked absence of activity, a good number of boarded up windows and doors, and some deterioration due to vandalism, the very rich history to which Port Union speaks is somewhat blurred upon entry to the town. The town's present state does not, however, ultimately conceal this history and the sense of time and place which is conveyed in Port Union. The town's history remains clearly legible in the extant buildings and spaces.

Nature and architecture are both visually prominent in Port Union. The large harbour, stretching out to sea, speaks to Newfoundland and the long history of dependence of the inhabitants of the country and then of the province on fish for their livelihood, while the general form of the architecture is representative in style and materials of outport Newfoundland. Perhaps the most prominent visual focal point in the town is the fish plant and the retail store, which speaks to the commercial success of the union ventures and to the independence achieved by the fishermen from the merchants, recalling both the international and national levels of business which they conducted. The train station, a small but prominently located building, is another illustration of Port Union's connection with fish markets around the world. The factory, the only extant building from the original period of the town's construction to have been occupied by a union company, speaks to the *Mail and Advocate* while the hydroelectric powerhouse and related components illustrate the fact that Port Union was then a modern town in Newfoundland, the first to bring electricity to the outports. The hotel recalls Port

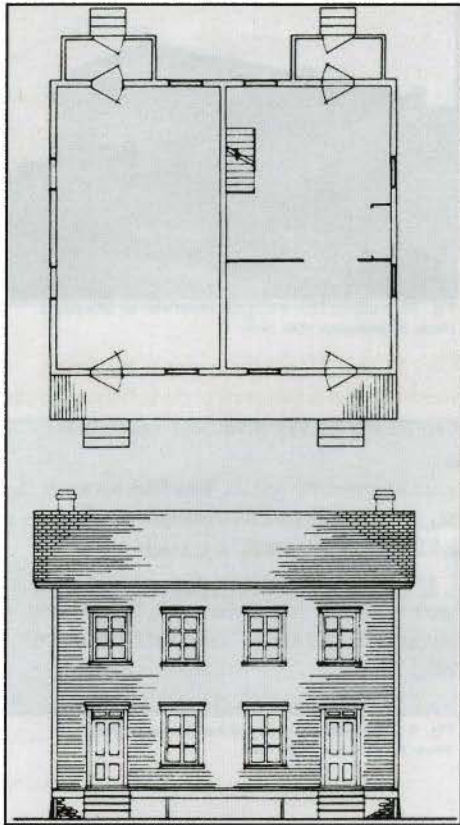


Fig. 52. Workers' houses, Val-Jalbert, Quebec. Measured drawings for houses built between 1904 and 1914. (Noppen, Luc. 1997. "Val-Jalbert: The Origins of a Planned Community", *Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada Bulletin*, vol. 22, March, no. 1, p. 9)

Union's many visitors, of international and national statures. Another prominent visual focal point is made up of the numerous residences, especially the duplexes. Their range in size and design, though limited, speaks to the hierarchy within the union and the union companies, and at the same

time, they speak as a whole to the improved conditions that the fishermen were able to acquire. Another prominent landmark is Holy Martyrs Church, the highest building in the town, recalling Coaker's concern for the spiritual welfare of his men.

As a whole, Port Union speaks to the Fishermen's Protective Union, which has recently been described by noted labour historian Greg Kealey as the union to have had the most impact for its period, not only in Newfoundland, but also in the rest of Canada.⁶⁷ Founded in the face of the hostility of the financial and commercial interests of Newfoundland,⁶⁸ Port Union is the visual expression of the break made by outport fishermen of Newfoundland's northeast coast from the control and influence of the St. John's Water Street merchants, severing a dependence that had lasted for centuries. Port Union speaks to the strength and power that unity had brought to the northern fishermen. According to historian Melvin Baker, Port Union was the "symbol" of the "organizational, commercial and political goals... nurtured"... by the union from the time of its founding.⁶⁹

Comparisons

As Port Union is a unique example of a town founded by a union, there are no other truly similar examples of towns to which it may be compared. However, Port Union does share features with two other categories of town: the Newfoundland outport and the Canadian single-industry town.⁷⁰ At the same time, Port Union differs from the outport in its history and layout, and from the single-industry town in its funding and governance.⁷¹

Fig. 53. The "Bungalow," seen from the northwest. (Photo: R. Goodspeed, HSB, 1998)



One of the characteristic features of Newfoundland is the outport, or small fishing village, hundreds of which dot the Newfoundland coast. The oldest of those villages were established centuries ago by fishermen coming from overseas who chose to settle in places which provided suitable waters for fishing. Those villages or towns grew spontaneously according to the needs of the inhabitants and were rarely, if ever, planned. The majority of the outports have remained small villages or towns though a small number were chosen by fish merchants for their premises. Greenspond and nearby Catalina are examples of typical outports, while Trinity and Bonavista became homes to fish merchants. (Bonavista, just up the coast from Port Union, is the location of Ryan Premises National Historic Site, which is owned by Parks Canada and represents the traditional Newfoundland fish merchant and the system that the Fishermen's Protective Union was trying to change.) In contrast to those towns, Port Union was deliberately created, relatively recently in 1916, and incorporated in 1961. It possessed a rudimentary plan reflected in the layout of buildings, which provides a contrast to the outports, such as Catalina. Further differences between Port Union and the typical outport reside in the design of buildings. While the architecture of both the outports and Port Union is strongly influenced by the vernacular tradition and shares the same materials, duplexes are rare in outport Newfoundland. The large industrial and commercial buildings (fish plant and retail store) also set the town apart from the other outports, which have no comparable buildings.

The period of construction of Port Union as well as its general layout and appearance bring to mind the single-industry or "company town" founded by a single enterprise or agency on which workers depended for housing, services, recreation, and livelihood.⁷² The general location of the buildings recalls the layout of the typical single-industry town of the era.

The history of single-industry communities begins with the "sleep camp," a rudimentary settlement of bunkhouses, a cookhouse, and a commissariat, which were all abandoned after the resources were exhausted. The "company town," with which Port Union shares some features, belongs to the second phase. It is characterized by the workers' dependency upon the company for housing, services, recreation and livelihood, typical of the era before about 1920.⁷³ Any planning carried out for the "company town" was on a private level, by the company, rather than by professionals, with no regulation from any outside body, such as a government. Planning was often restricted to little more than grid surveys, and the town was closely associated with the

Fig. 55. Aerial view of Marysville.
(Energy Mines and Resources Canada, National Air Photo Library, A27698-22, April 1991)

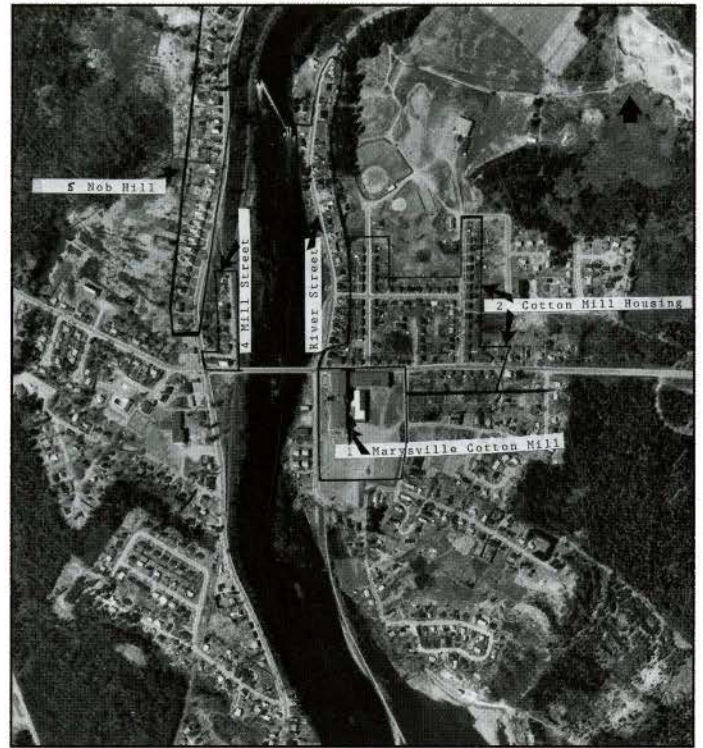
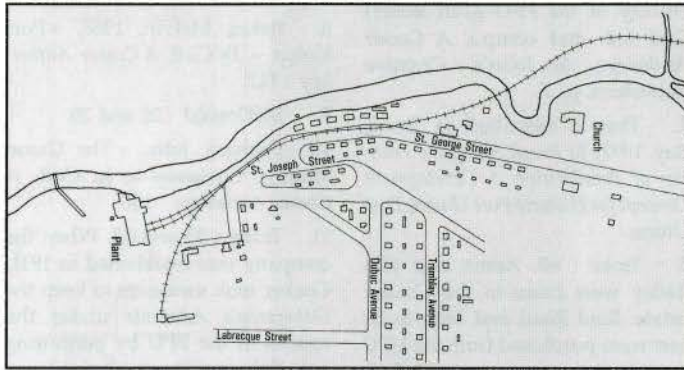


Fig. 54. Val-Jalbert, Quebec, layout of buildings and cadastral lots in 1927.
(Noppen, 1997 : 9)



industrial plant. That type was eventually superseded by the fully planned single-industry community (though it overlapped with the previous in time) as an initiative to attract and maintain a stable workforce due to the enormous investments required to exploit natural resources. Powell River Townsite, B.C., is an example of that type. A period of "holistic" planning followed that phase, featuring an overall plan allowing for expansion and land-use segregation, while after World War II, the "comprehensive" planning period promoted a more socially-oriented humanistic "model city" of the Radburn type.⁷⁴ In its overall appearance and design, Port Union resembles a small early single-industry town with two of its most striking architectural features—its very prominent industrial and commercial buildings and its nearby duplexes of very similar design conveying that they were built for the workers. Port Union also exhibits a simple plan, for which Coaker and the union were ultimately responsible.

One of many examples to which Port Union may be compared is the small town of Val-Jalbert, in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region of Quebec, which was begun in 1901 as an industrial site for a pulp mill, and abandoned in 1927 (fig. 54).⁷⁵ The construction of the town took place under the supervision of a succession of three company owners, with the layout and erection of the industrial buildings taking place in the first stage (1901-04; only a boarding house provided living quarters during those years) and the layout of additional streets and construction of the company houses in later stages by subsequent owners, all before 1924. While Port Union was built over a nine-year period, that town was constructed over 23 years in various stages. Some of those stages exhibit certain planning in layout; in the final analysis, Val-Jalbert resembles Port Union in layout, with its

commercial and institutional district at the entrance to the town, an industrial district at the opposite end, near the falls, and a residential district in between, whose edges blend into the industrial/commercial area.

Like many towns of that type, Port Union exhibits rudimentary planning, was run by a single agency, and possesses similar building types. Within that context, however, Port Union is an average example. In any event, Port Union is not really a "company town" but is rather a unique example of a town founded by a union, one that has clearly been influenced in form by the single-industry towns of the day.

Two single-industry towns have already received national commemoration, both of which are exceptional examples of their types, representing different phases in the development of the single-industry town. In 1993, the Board considered that Marysville, New Brunswick (fig. 55), "provides a rare example of a single-industry company town of the 19th century possessing both its plant and company housing. Further, the historic district contains a full range of community facilities, including industrial, commercial, and residential buildings, erected approximately between 1840 and 1890, and it largely retains its 19th century appearance and character."⁷⁶ One excellent example of a fully planned 20th-century single-industry community of that phase was commemorated in 1995. Powell River Townsite, B.C., was described by the Board as "a well-preserved and progressive example of the earliest phase of planned 20th century single-industry communities in Canada, exhibiting evidence of all the characteristics of this planning phase: a strong focus on the mill, a gridiron pattern of streets, standardized house plans segregated by class, and little significant allowance for measured growth (fig. 56)."⁷⁷

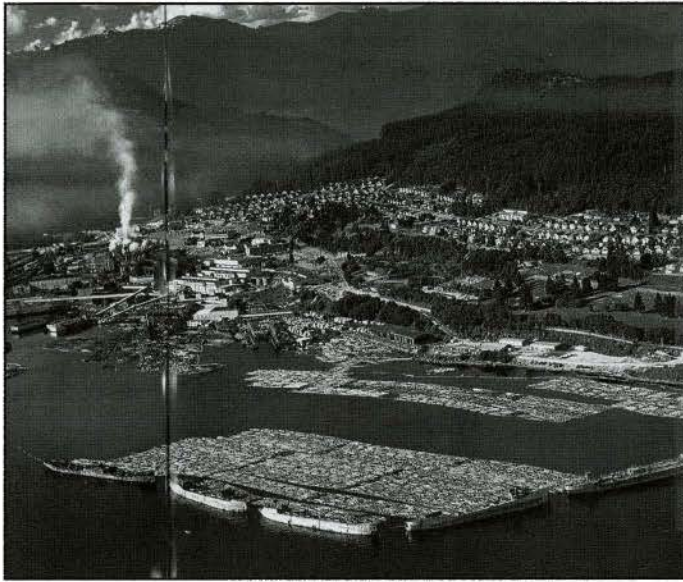


Fig. 56. Aerial view of the Powell River Townsite from the southwest, 1992. (Bruhn, Karl, 1992. « Powell River: This Feisty Mill Town Sings its Own Song », *Beautiful British Columbia*, vol. 34, no. 3, fall, p. 4-5. Photo by G. Patrick Green)

Conclusion

Port Union is a unique example in Canada of a town founded by a union. The founding of Port Union was a daring and remarkable venture without parallel in the country. It was Coaker's enormous vision which found material expression in the construction of the town, an expression made possible by a good portion of Newfoundland's fishermen who were willing to place their trust in him, all accomplished in the face of the resistance and hostility of the financial and commercial interests of the Newfoundland establishment of the day. Port Union is both a symbol and an expression of the Fishermen's Protective Union and of its success in severing, at least for a time for some of the fishermen, a dependence on merchants, which had lasted centuries. Among its accomplishments were the unprecedented introduction of electricity to the outports, and, speaking especially to the largeness of the dream, is the revival, with some success, of the shipbuilding industry.

The town retains a high degree of integrity due to the readability of its original plan and of the survival, with little change, of buildings that are nearly all from the original period of construction of the town or of replacements for those buildings on the same sites having the same functions. Among the losses, only one is truly significant—that of the union hall. The boundaries of the proposed historic district are clearly readable based on their arrangement around the triangle of streets, and on the differences within and outside of the district, in land use and in layout of buildings. The architecture of the buildings is cohesive with a minimum of additions and intrusions and speaks, in design and materials, to the historical context of outport Newfoundland. Although Port Union is in a stage of transition, the very rich history to which the town speaks is still clearly legible in the natural features of its site and in its extant buildings, which together combine to give the proposed historic district a sense of time and place.

Notes

1. Cuff, Robert, 1986, « A Brief History of the FPU », In Robert Cuff (ed. and comp.), *A Coaker Anthology*, St. John's, Creative Publishers, p. 7.
2. That is described in Troke, Ray, 1997, *To Prowl Along the Frontier of Possibilities: A Development Concept for Historic Port Union*, Port Union.
3. Troke : 60. Aaron and Ella Bailey were heirs to the Coaker estate. Reid Road and land to its east were purchased from the UTC by private investors in 1995. It is not known who owns the property where the train station and union shipbuilding company once stood. Bruce Sweetland, Chairperson, William F. Coaker Heritage Foundation, telephone conversation with the author, May 1998.
4. Sweetland, telephone conversation with the author, August 1998.
5. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Minutes, June 1989.
6. One of the primary goals of the union was "to promote the commercial welfare of the fishermen." McDonald, Ian D.H., 1987, In J.K. Hiller (ed.), "To Each His Own:" *William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925*, St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland, p. 29.
7. To establish that, the author conducted telephone interviews with historians, particularly those with experience in the labour movement, in both Academe and provincial governments, and others involved in heritage, from all ten provinces, to see if any of them were aware of any other town in Canada that had been founded by a union. A number of those people also consulted colleagues to see if they knew of any such examples.

No one was able to identify a similar example, either in their own province, or in the rest of Canada.

8. Baker, Melvin, 1986, « Port Union », In Cuff, *A Coaker Anthology* : 112.

9. McDonald : 21 and 25.

10. Feltham, John, « The Union Trading Company », In Cuff, *A Coaker Anthology* : 100.

11. Troke : 33 and 42. When the company was established in 1911, Coaker took measures to keep the *Fishermen's Advocate* under the control of the FPU by permitting only fishermen to purchase shares in the company. McDonald : 26. For a time it included morning and evening, as well weekly editions. Feltham, *The Union Trading* : 97; Dutton, John J., et al., 1979, *A Study of the Port Union Power Station*, senior student report, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, Memorial University of Newfoundland, p. 86.

12. Those were located in Botwood, Change Islands, Doting Cove (all settlements along Notre-Dame Bay), and King's Cove (Bonavista Bay). By 1913, the company was supplying 20 union stores in the outports and by 1917 the number had risen to 40. Feltham, *The Union Trading* : 88. The UTC either bought stores or acquired waterfront and built its own store. Each branch consisted of a retail store, fish store, salt shed, and a pier able to accommodate trading schooners. The union constitution provided for the cash purchase of bulk wholesale provisions for local branches of the union.

13. McDonald : 30. Taxes and other charges in St. John's were enormous while in the outports there was no property tax. Baker, 1986 : 103-113; and Feltham, John, « The UTC and the Commercial Activities of the FPU », In Cuff, *A Coaker Anthology* : 87-101.

14. Coaker acquired the site in 1915 for approximately \$500 from the Catalina firm of McCormack and Walsh, which, in 1877, had bought the land from the heirs of the Scottish Thompson family.
15. Dates for the buildings are from Coaker, William F. (comp.), 1997, *Twenty Years of the Fishermen's Protective Union*; Dutton et al., 1979, *A Study of the Port Union Power Station*, «Supplement: Mail and Advocate Excerpts»; and Baker, Melvin, 1997, transcribed *Mail and Advocate* excerpts, August, at www.ucs.mun.ca/~melbaker; and Baker, 1986.
16. Coaker convinced the fishermen to buy shares in FPU sponsored companies, a definite achievement as no one wished to part with their money since the Crash of 1894. Coaker used union funds either as loans or investments in shares in the company to construct the proposed premises. Profits from general business also helped pay part of the cost. Labour costs were kept down by Catalina unionists who provided work in return for shares.
17. Sweetland, site visit, 2 May 1998.
18. *Mail and Advocate*, 22 December 1917, quoted by Dutton et al., 1979, *Supplement* : 40. See also Coaker.
19. Baker, 1986 : 106.
20. Coaker : 117.
21. Dutton et al., 1979 : *Appendix 3* : 65.
22. Troke : 45; and McDonald : 30. The date of closure is based upon interviews with the residents of the town. Gail Doody, Curator, The "Bungalow," telephone conversation with the author, 10 July 1998.
23. Dutton et al., 1979 : 1, 38, 42, and 46.
24. *Telegram* (Newfoundland Historical Society, undated photocopy); and Coaker : 127.
25. The dates for the houses are based on a plan of 1917, Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), «Reid Newfoundland Company, Plan Proposed Terminal»; and Coaker.
26. Those on the lower main street cost \$12 a month while those on the upper street cost \$6.
27. Coaker : 224.
28. The date for that building remains to be confirmed. Perhaps it is the building referred to in the *Evening Advocate*, 22 December 1917: "The bungalow erected for the General Manager is the best of its kind in the country, and adds to the picturesque appearance of the settlement." While the building has two storeys and is not strictly speaking a bungalow, it should be noted that Coaker's two-storey house is called the "Bungalow," and that the term bungalow was used in England at the time to refer to a villa. Dutton et al., 1979, *Supplement* : 41. That building has also been dated to the first half of the 1940s, based on style. Troke : 44; and Gail Doody, Curator. The "Bungalow," telephone conversation, 10 July, 1998.
29. Gail Doody, telephone conversation with the author, 10 July 1998; and Sweetland, telephone conversation with the author, 8 July 1998.
30. Baker, 1986 : 107; and *Mail and Advocate*, 23 September 1916, quoted in Dutton et al., 1979 : 20.
31. Granger, Charles R., Aaron Bailey, and Linda Clarke (comp. and ed.), n.d., n.p., «'The Bungalow,' Home of Sir William Ford Coaker», pamphlet.
32. Coaker : 171-72.
33. Granger et al.. During those years, a nurse often played the role of physician and midwife, as there was frequently no doctor in the community. Nurses in small communities in Newfoundland and in Canada were becoming increasingly common during those years. Dianne Dodd, historian, Historical Services Branch, Parks Canada, conversation with the author, 27 August 1998.
34. Secretary, Sir William F. Coaker Heritage Foundation, site visit, May 1998.
35. Troke : 44.
36. See Coaker.
37. Feltham, *The Union Trading* : 107; and Baker, 1986 : 111.
38. McBurney, Margaret, and Mary Byers, 1997, *True Newfoundlanders: Early Homes and Families of Newfoundland and Labrador*, Boston Mills, Ontario, The Boston Mills Press, p. 70.
39. *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, «Port Union», at <http://enl.cuff.com/entru/69/6977.htm>.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
41. Cuff, «A Brief History of the F.P.U.» : 7.
42. *Mail and Advocate* excerpts, transcribed by Melvin Baker, August 1997, at www.ucs.mun.ca/~melbaker.
43. Vincent, Elizabeth, 1985, *Sir William Ford Coaker, 1871-1938*, Agenda Paper, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 38, p. 286.
44. Dutton et al., 1979 : 6.
45. By 1981 the population had grown to 681. *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, «Port Union», at <http://enl.cuff.com/entru/69/6977.htm>.
46. So-described in *The Rounder*, March 1979, p. 43. Photocopy on file at Newfoundland Historical Society; and Dutton et al., 1979 : 6.
47. Cuff, 1986 : 7.
48. No names were found for those streets during research or interviews for this report. Sweetland, who was born in the town and has recently served as mayor, confirmed that of the four streets in old Port Union, only Reid Road has a name, and that the lower street was generally referred to as the main street. Site visit, May 1998.
49. The original fish plant had been remarkable for its size, its electric freight elevators, its electrically powered cold-storage rooms, and its electric fish dryers, comparable in their day in Newfoundland only to contemporaries in St. John's. «Port Union: Observation and Description», *Fishermen's Advocate*, 22 December 1917, transcribed by Dutton et al., 1979 : 39-42. The original UTC store was four-storey high and the fish plant and salt store, three. Those were the only electrically powered buildings in Newfoundland outside of St. John's.
50. The only signs of that once immense structure are a concrete step, a walkway, and a section of a concrete footing. Troke : 44.
51. Site visit, May 1998; Sweetland, telephone conversation with the author, May 1998; and Troke : 45.
52. Those include one duplex on the lower main street (fig. 20) and two or three of the smallest ones on the street perpendicular to the upper street, above Bungalow Hill (fig. 23). The duplex lost in the fire was across from the Coaker residence but its precise site has not been identified.
53. Sweetland, conversation with the author, August 1997.
54. Noppen, Luc, 1997, «Val-Jalbert: The Origins of a Planned Community», *Society for the Study*

of *Architecture in Canada Bulletin*, vol. 22, no. 1, p. 8.

55. The wooden fence along the upper road replaced one in stone, five feet high, built after Coaker's death in 1938. Sweetland, site visit, 10 June.

56. McBurney and Byers : 72.

57. « Newsletter », Sir William F. Coaker Heritage Foundation, September 1997, p. 4. The restoration of the original steeple is a part of the development concept for the town, set out by the Foundation.

58. Other examples of gifts he received from people in Europe are located in the "Bungalow." Site visit, May 1998.

59. Sweetland, telephone conversation with the author, 10 June 1998.

60. Gail Doody, Curator, The "Bungalow," telephone conversation, June 1998. Also buried within the cemetery are James Bailey as well as Ella and Aaron Bailey, heirs to the Coaker estate.

61. Troke : 42.

62. Sweetland, interview during site visit, May 1998.

63. Ray Troke, on behalf of the Sir William Ford Coaker Heritage Foundation, to Rhona Goodspeed, 29 August 1998.

64. Sweetland, interview and site visit, May 1998.

65. The hydroelectric station was one of the first constructed in Newfoundland during the early years of the century, which is still in use. It was the first in Newfoundland to have a flume or penstock built of pine staves held together by iron bands and was a historical landmark in terms of technology in Newfoundland of the early 1900s, though its 400-horsepower generator and stave flume were standard in Canada for the time. Dutton *et al.*, 1979 : 2; and Arnold Roos, historian, Historical Services Branch, Parks

Canada, conversation with the author, 8 July 1998.

66. Dutton *et al.*, 1979 : 1.

67. Greg Kealey, Professor, History Department, Memorial University, telephone conversation with the author; May 1998.

68. See, for example, McDonald : p. 31.

69. Baker, 1986 : 110.

70. In 1977, after the closure of most of the union companies but before that of the fishery in 1992, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion conducted a study of single industry communities in Canada, which categorized Port Union as a single-industry town of under 1,000 inhabitants. In the same study, a single industry community was defined as one in which there exists a "single dominant economic activity (a single employer or group of employers in a single economic activity/industry) and which is not within commuting distance of another area or areas offering alternative employment opportunities." Port Union was one of 52 such communities identified in Newfoundland and one of 78 communities and towns of all sizes in the same province that had fish or fish processing as their industrial base. *Single Industry Communities*. Ottawa: Department of Regional Economic Expansion, 1997, p. 3 and 14.

71. Another example that invites comparison with Port Union is the community of Sointula (meaning harmony) on Malcolm Island in British Columbia, founded by Finnish settlers at the beginning of the century. In the 1930s, it had a population of 450. Intended to be a colony based on independent, self-sustaining enterprise, logging, fishing, and agriculture, the community met with great hardship and eventually became largely residential. The co-operative spirit

and goals of Sointula may be reminiscent of those of Port Union; however, although Port Union possessed for a time some qualities of cooperatives (union members owning shares in the union companies), ownership of shares was not ultimately restricted to union members. In its early years, Sointula also had an interest in the labour movement. Aili Anderson, *History of Sointula*, Sointula, B.C., Sointula Centennial Committee, 1958.

72. Oberlander, Peter and Cornelia, 1956, « Critique: Canada's New Towns », *Progressive Architecture*, vol. 37, no. 8, August, p. 113.

73. Stelter, Gilbert A., and Alan F.J. Artibise, 1978, « Canadian Resource Towns in Historical Perspective », *Plan Canada*, vol. 18, no. 1, March, p. 11-12; and McCann, D., 1978, « The Changing Internal Structure of Canadian Resource Towns », *Plan Canada*, vol. 18, no. 1, March, p. 46. Another town in Newfoundland whose layout was governed by some planning is Corner Brook. See McBurney and Byers : 197-201.

74. Fulton, Gordon, 1995, *Powell River Townsite Historic District, Powell River, British Columbia*, Agenda Paper, HSMBC, 17, p. 485.

75. For that town, see Noppen : 4-10.

76. See Johnson, Dana, 1993, *Historic Marysville (Fredericton), New Brunswick*, Agenda Paper, HSMBC, p. 44; and HSMBC, Minutes, November 1993.

77. See Fulton : 484; and HSMBC, Minutes, July 1995.