

VESSELS
IN
NEWFOUNDLAND GULF
AND
COASTAL SERVICE

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST
1898 - 1987

This is intended to be a complete chronological list of all vessels operated in Newfoundland Coastal and Gulf Service by the railway companies since the beginning of combined rail-sea operation in 1898. Sources of information include Lloyd's Registers, Registration Records of the Port of St. John's contained in the Newfoundland archives, CN Marine files and personal knowledge of employees past and present. While the information contained herein cannot be guaranteed correct in every respect, considerable care, including cross checking of most entries, has been taken to ensure that it is as accurate as possible.

All vessels owned by the Crown or the railway companies, or acquired on bare-boat charter, are included. Vessels which operated on time-charter are not listed.

<u>Vessel</u>	<u>Operator</u>	<u>Acquire</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Built</u>	<u>Builder</u>	<u>Other Historical Data</u>
S.S. Bruce	Reid	1898	237 BP)	1155	1897	A & J. Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	First sailing ex Port aux Basques to North Sydney, 30 June 1898; lost near Louisbourg; 24 March 1911; two passengers drowned
S.S. Glencoe	Reid-NR-CN	1899	208 BP)	767	1899	A & J. Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	Sold June 1959; scrapped at Sorel, PQ
S.S. Argyle	Reid	1900	155(BP)	439	1900	A & J. Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	Sold 1942; Subsequently lost near Cuba; 14 July 1946
S.S. Clyde	Reid-NR	1900	155(BP)	439	1900	A & J Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	J. Inglis, Glasgow, Sold to Crosbie & Co. 1948; lost at Williamsport; 17 Dec 1951
S.S. Dundee	Reid	1900	155(BP)	439	1900	A & J Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	Lost Grassy Island, Gander Bay, Newfoundland; 25 Dec 1919
S.S. Ethie	Reid	1900	155(BP)	439	1900	A & J Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	J. Inglis, Glasgow, Lost Martin's Point, St. Barbe Coast, NF; 11 Dec 1919
S.S. Fife	Reid	1900	155(BP)	439	1900	A & J Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	Lost on first voyage, Strait of Belle Isle, Nfld., 14 Nov 1919. Scotland
S.S. Home	Reid-NR	1900	155(BP)	439	1900	A & J Inglis, Glasgow, Scotland	Sold 1948; Sand in Jersey Hr., Fortune Bay, Newfoundland
S.S. Virginia Lake	Reid	1900(A)	180(BP)	760	1888	A Macmillan & Son . Dunbarton, Scotland	Lost at seal hunt; March 1909
S.S. Invermore	Reid	1909	250(BP)	975	1881	Barclay, Curle & Co., Glasgow, Scotland	Formerly S.S. Dramdary; Lost Brig Harbor Point, Labrador; 10 July 1914
S. S. Bruce (second)	Reid	1912	250(BP)	1553	1912	Napier & Miller Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland	Sold to Russian Government 1915
S.S. Kyle	Reid-NR-CN	1913	220(BP)	1055	1913	Swan Hunter, Newcastle, England	Sold Dec 1959; Ran aground in Harbour Grace, NF; 1962(A)

							Lying Derelict
S.S. Lintrose	Reid	1913	255(BP)	1616	1913	Swan Hunter, Newcastle, England	Sold to Russian Government, 1915
S.S. Meigle	Reid-NR	1914(A)	220(BP)	836	1881	Barclay Curle & Co., Glasgow, Scotland	Formerly S.S. Solway; sold 1936 Shaw Steamships Ltd., Lost Marina Cove near St. Shotts, 19 July 1947
S.S. Sagona	Reid-NR	1914(A)	175(BP)	808	1912	Dundee Ship Building, Dundee, Scotland	Sold 1940(A) to Colliford Clarke Co., London England, SEE NOTE B
Portia	NR	1924	218(A)	978	1904	Murdoch & Murry Glasgow, Scotland	Sold 1940(A) SEE NOTE C
S.S. Prospero	NR	1924	218(OA)	978	1904	Murdoch & Murry Glasgow, Scotland	Sold 1937 SEE NOTE C
S.S. Caribou	NR	1925	276(OA)	2222	1925	A. Goodwin Hamilton Adamson, Rotterdam, Netherlands	Torpedoed and sunk in Cabot Strait; 14 Oct 1942; 137 lives lost
S.S. Malakoff	NR	1925(A)	136(BP)	321	1918	Canadian Car & Foundry Fort William, ON.	Transferred to Department of Natural Resources; 1936
S.S. Northern Ranger	NR-CN	1936	228(OA)	1366	1936	Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley, Scotland	Retired; 16 Sept 1966 Sold as scrap; July 1967
S.S. Burgeo	NR-CN	1940	242(OA)	1421	1940	Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley, Scotland	Retired 1969; sold as scrap
S.S. Baccalieu	NR-CN	1940	242(OA)	1421	1940	Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley, Scotland	Retired 1969; sold as scrap
S.S. Moyra	NR	1942(A0)	248(BP)	1396	1931	Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson, Sunderland, England	Lost: St. Lawrence River 1945(A)
S.S. Random	NR-CN	1942(A)	279(OA)	1792	1921	Nusch & Company Ststtin, Germany	Formerly S.S. Hondu. Originally S.S. Gustav Fescher; Sold 1961
S.S. Northton	NR	1943	248(BP)	2227	1924	Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson,	Sold 1946

						Newcastle, England	
MV Henry Stone	NR-CN	1944(A)	138(OA)	265	1942	H.W. Stone, Monroe, T. Bay, Nfld	Lost at Lake Melville 1959
MV Clarenville	NR-CN	1944	135(OA)	322	1944	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	Sold 1964(A) SEE NOTE D
MV Burin	NR-CN	1945	135(OA)	322	1945	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	Sold 1965 SEE NOTE D
MV Codroy	NR-CN	1945	135(OA)	322	1945	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	Sold 1964(A) SEE NOTE D
MV Bonne Bay	NR	1945(A)	135(A)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	Lost, St Shotts, Nfld, 1946 SEE NOTE D
MV Trepassey	NR	1945(A)	135(OA)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	SEE NOTE D
MV Glenwood	NR	1945(A)	135(OA)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	SEE NOTE D
MV Exploits	NR	1945(A)	135(OA)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	SEE NOTE D
MV Placentia	NR	1945(A)	135(OA)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	SEE NOTE D
MV Ferryland	NR	1945(A)	135(OA)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	SEE NOTE D
MV Twillingate	NR	1945(A)	135(OA)	322	1945(A))	Clarenville Shipyard Clarenville, Nfld	SEE NOTE D
S.S. Brigus	NR-CN	1946(A)	315(BP)	2875	1943	Foundation Maritime Pictou, N.S.	Formerly S.S. Rockcliffe, Park; Sold 1955
S.S. Cabot Strait	NR-CN	1947	272(OA)	2045	1947	Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley, Scotland	Retired 1974; Sold as scrap 1978
S. S. Springdale	NR-CN	1948	210(OA)	1138	1948	Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley, Scotland	Retired 1973; sold as scrap
S. S. Bar Haven	NR-CN	1948	210(OA)	1138	1948	Fleming & Ferguson, Paisley, Scotland	Retired 1973; sold as scrap
MV William Carson	CN	1955	351(OA)	8272	1955	Canadian Vickers, Montreal, PQ	Commenced regular Gulf Service Oct 1958; Re-assigned to Labrador Service 1976; Lost off Square

MV Bonavista	CN	1956	214(OA)	1173	1956	Hall, Russel & Co. Aberdeen, Scotland	Island; 2 June 1977 Sold; 20 Nov 1986 to Lignes Maritime Sagafford Inc., Quebec City, Canada
MV Nonia	CN	1956	214(OA)	1173	1956	Hall, Russel & Co. Aberdeen, Scotland	Assigned to Federal Fisheries Dept 1976; Sold by Crown Assets, 1980
MV Hopedale	CN	1960	188(OA)	1105	1960	Collingwood Shipyards Collingwood, Ontario	Fire, 14 Mar 1984 at Port aux Basques, Nfld. Sank at berth, 15 Mar 1984. Refloated and scuttled 22 Jun 1984, 10 miles south of Channel Head, Nfld.
MV Petite Forte	CN	1961	173(OA)	1048	1961	Saint John Shipbuilders, Saint John, N.B.	
MV Taverner	CN	1962	188(OA)	1135	1962	Collingwood Shipyards, Collingwood, Ontario	
S.S. Patric Morris	CN	1965	467(OA)	10135	1951	Canadian Vickers, Montreal, PQ	Formerly S.S. New Grand Haven. Lost, 20 April 1970; four officers died.
MV Leif Eriksson	CN	1966	377(OA)	6066	1964	Werft Nobiskrug Rendsburg, w. Germany	Formerly MV Prins Bertil. Sold 1976, re-named MV Ionian Star
MV Ambrose Shea	CN	1967	391(OA)	9465	1967	Marine Industries Ltd. Sorel, PQ	
MV Frederick Carter	CN	1968	486(OA)	12220	1968	Davie Shipbuilding, Lauzon, PQ	
MV Stena Carrier	CN*	1970	347(OA)	1599	1970	Kristiansands Mek Verksted, Kristiansand, Norway	Charter Terminated 1974
MV John Hamilton Grey	CN	1971	400(OA)	11260	1968	Marine Industries Ltd. Sorel, PQ	P.E.I. Vessel used in Gulf Service, 1971-1972
MV Lucy Maude Montgomery	CN	1971	283(OA)	4245	1965	Ateliers et Chantiers de la Seine Maritime, Le Trait, France	Formerly MV Stena Danica. P.E.I. Vessel used in Gulf Service, 1971-1972
MV Marine Cruiser	CN*	1973	372(OA)	4141	1959	New South Wales Government Engineering Shipbuilding, Newcastle Australia	Formerly MV Princess of Tasmania

MV Stena Trailer	CN*	1973	343(OA)	1306	1972	Akers Trondjems, Trondheim, Norway	Charter terminated 1974
MV Jarl Transporter	CN*	1973	345(OA)	1301	1973	Akers Trondjems, Trondeim, Norway	Charter terminated 1974
MV Sea Trader	CN*	1973	378(OA)	2572	1973	A. Vuyk & Zonnen, Capelle, Netherlands	Charter terminated 1975
MV Stena Sailer	CN*	1974	378(OA)	2500	1973	A. Vuyk & Zonnen, Capelle, Netherlands	Charter terminated 1975
MV Marine Packer	CN*	1974	232(OA)	1101	1965	Soviknes Verft, Syvikgrend, Norway	Formerly MV Blikur
MV Percy M. Crosbie	CN*	1974	275(OA)	2362	1959	Pusnes Mek Verksted, Arendal, Norway	Formerly MV Prela Dan. Charter terminated 1977
MV Marine Sprinter	CN*	1974	94(OA)	128	1974	Camcraft Inc., Crown Point, Louisiana	
MV Marine Nautica	CN*	1974	396(OA)	5443	1974	Rickmers Werft, Bremerhaven, w. Germany	Formerly MV Stena Nautica
MV Marine Atlantica	CN*	1975	396(OA)	5441	1975	Rickmers Werft Bremerhaven, w. Germany	
MV Marine Runner	CN*	1975	91(OA)	138	1975	Camcraft Inc. Crown Point, Louisiana	
MV Sir Robert Bond	CN	1975	433(OA)	10433	1975	Port Weller Drydocks, Port Weller, Ontario	
MV Stena Nordica	CN*	1976	394(OA)	5429	1976	Rickmers Werft, Bermerhaven, w. Germany	
MV Caribou (2 nd)	MA	1986	179(OA)	27213 metric	1986	Versatile Davies Inc., Lauzon, Quebec	
MV Northern Ranger	MA	1986	71.8(OA)	2561 metric	1986	Port Weller Drydocks, St. Catherines, Ontario	

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS, ETC.

- * Vessel acquired by CN on bare-boat charter
- (A)** Approximately
- (BP)** Between perpendiculars; the distance on the summer load waterstem from the fore side of the stem to the after side of the rudder post
- (OA)** Overall measurement. Where this value was not available, length between perpendiculars has been given.
- REID** R.G. Reid, later incorporated as Reid Newfoundland Company operators of Newfoundland's railway system, 1898-1923
- NR** Newfoundland Railway, a Government agency, which operated the system from 1923 to 1949
- CN** Canadian National, later CN Marine, assumed operation in 1949

NOTES

- A. The Reid Company acquired a second vessel of this name around 1908, a 108-foot (BP) steam yacht of 96 gross tons, used for private purposes. The Reids also acquired a 129-foot (BP) salvage tug of 346 gross tons about the same time. The vessel S.S Petrel, was turned over to the Government with the rest of the fleet in 1923, but was scrapped two years later.
- B. This vessel was originally operated by Crosbie and Company in a subsidized coastal service northward from St. John's, but was acquired by the Reids around 1914.
- C. Portia and Prospero were sister ships, built for Bowering Brothers, operated for 29 years under a government subsidy contract. On the expiration of the contract in 1924, they were picked up by the Newfoundland Railway.
- D. The "Splinter Fleet" was a group of ten wooden ships built in Clarenville during the mid 1940s. They were owned by the Department of Resources, but operated by the Newfoundland Railway. CN acquired three of them in 1949, while the Government retained the remainder, soon selling them to private operators. MV Trepassey operated in Northern Labrador for a decade, on time charter to CN, until delivery of MV Hopedale in 1960.

THE COASTAL SERVICE – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The CN Marine coastal service of today can trace its roots directly to the Newfoundland Railway contract of 1898, between the colonial government and R.G. Reid. In addition to operating the railway he had just completed across the island, the contractor undertook to supply and operate a fleet of eight steamers, one of which was to link the Newfoundland Railway with the mainland system via Port aux Basques and North Sydney, and the remainder to connect the railway with the out ports it did not directly reach.

After a quarter century of unprofitable operation, the contract terminated, with the government assuming direct responsibility for both rail and marine services. This situation continued until confederation with Canada in 1949, when the terms of union stipulated that the federal government would assume that obligation. The Newfoundland Railway and its ancillary functions were thereupon absorbed by Canadian National Railways.

The fleet inherited by the CNR in 1949 was not unlike the original assembled under the 1898 contract. It consisted of seven steel passenger-freighters, two freighters, four small wooden vessels, and the new gulf steamer Cabot Strait. One of the seven passenger-freighters had been one of Reid's originals, and another dated from 1913. Two had been built just the year before.

This varied and hard-working fleet did not meet the entire transport needs of thousands of small communities, spread over thousands of miles of coastline, where roads were practically unknown. There was also a large number of privately-owned schooners and small passenger vessels supplementing the railway fleet. In comparison with the perennially-impooverished Newfoundland Railway, the CNR appeared to have plenty of money to spend. The coastal fleet was upgraded and expanded. Between 1956 and 1962 five new passenger-freighters were placed in service, and the two oldest ones retired. Additional freighters were chartered. The coastal fleet was growing.

Costs were growing too. But tariffs remained unchanged from their pre-confederation levels, and federal subsidies increased to cover the ever-widening gap between costs and revenues. Faced with such subsidized competition, the privately-operated coastal trade just quietly disappeared.

But other things were changing in the new province too. Two major factors arose in the 1960s that were to profoundly affect the future of out port Newfoundland, and with it the coastal service. The first was resettlement, a program under which the Smallwood government enticed, and sometimes allegedly coerced, residents of small, isolated communities to relocate to more centrally-located areas where modern services could more readily be provided. Hundreds of out ports ceased to exist. The second factor was an aggressive program of road construction. A paved highway was completed across the island in 1965, and by the end of the decade branch roads were reaching out to the vast majority of the remaining out ports. By the end of the seventies, most of these secondary roads had been paved also.

By the late sixties, the coastal passenger service found itself facing a declining demand. The family car had replaced the coastal vessel as the chief people-mover in most out ports. Three passenger-freighters were retired and not replaced between 1966 and 1969. Two more went in the early seventies. But while the convenience of the automobile outpaced the low fares on the coastal vessels to claim the passenger traffic, the effect on freight traffic was not great. In comparison with coastal tariffs that had not changed since the 1930s, trucking rates appeared very expensive. The void created by the retirement of five passenger-freighters was filled by acquiring additional cargo capacity on a bare-boat charter basis.

It was not until 1979 that the first significant curtailment in coastal freight service took place. Pointing to a previously unpublicized agreement between St. John's and Ottawa, consenting to the elimination of coastal service on the island's west coast in exchange for federal funding of a highway and a ferry link across the Strait of Belle Isle, Transport Canada directed the closure of the coastal terminal at Corner Brook.

But while the coastal service was in decline in most areas of the island, both passenger and freight demand showed continued growth in Labrador. Except for a few southern communities on the Strait of Belle Isle, coastal Labrador is still isolated from the highway network, a situation unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. With the arrival of a second car ferry in the gulf service in 1966, the Labrador route also took a step forward, receiving the Cabot Strait, a considerably larger vessel than any of the previous passenger-freighters. And, history repeated itself a decade later, when the side-loading ice-breaking car ferry William Carson was declared surplus to the gulf, just as the Cabot Strait had reached the end of her useful life.

The Carson marked the dawn of a new era to the Labrador coastal service. In addition to her large passenger and freight capacity, she brought car ferry service to Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the only large community in that coast. Her route was a weekly-round trip from St. John's to Goose Bay via Lewisport, St. Anthony and Cartwright and her second debut in Labrador was accorded an enthusiastic welcome.

The joy turned to grief the following year when the Carson, apparently holed by multi-year Arctic ice, went down on her first northward trip of the season. Her eventual replacement came also from the gulf. The railcar ferry Sir Robert Bond was modified with the addition of accommodation for 200 passengers. In order to match the capacity of the Carson, a twice weekly schedule was adopted, necessitating the elimination of the St. John's-Lewisport segment and the stop at St. Anthony.

In addition to providing a high standard of car ferry service to Goose Bay, the Bond has also brought greater efficiency to freight handling. Most of the cargo she carries moves in ISO containers, and she can also handle highway trailers. The Labrador freight service from St. John's followed this example, and in 1981 a modern roll-on, roll-off container ship was time chartered, resulting in the elimination of two conventional chartered freighters.

The first two decades following confederation saw considerable growth in the coastal service, but essentially little change in the methods of operation. But the seventies saw

many innovations, not only to Labrador but on the island as well. Unitization of cargo to small out ports, using plastic-wrapped pallets, resulted in improved vessel utilization through faster loading and unloading. It also produced a reduction in loss and damage to cargo. On the passenger side, two 91-foot aluminum-hulled passenger vessels were introduced on the south coast of the island, giving a faster, more frequent service at lower operating cost.

The new techniques tried in the seventies are to be expanded in the eighties. Transport Canada has already directed some changes in service levels, and there are more to come. But the future course of the coastal service is directed at communities that do not have other transportation options. It will use dedicated, higher speed vessels for passenger service and freight vessels designed for optimum handling of unitized cargo.