

Rowe Family of Trinity

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Heart's Content Shipwrecks by Melvin Rowe

http://willofjehovah.com/Family%20History/_Rowe,%20Melvin%20Books/Hearts%20Content%20Shipwrights/Edition%202/HCS%20Complete%20ed2%20v2%20web.htm#Appendix_A2

The basis for this edition of ``Heart's Content Shipwrights'' (HCS) is a copy of a manuscript completed in 1988 by Melvin Rowe (1906-1991), which I obtained from Alex Rowe (son of Bert Rowe son of John S. Rowe) in July 2007. In this manuscript were included historical facts, official records, and family trees along with many personal anecdotes and stories passed from generation to generation about the shipwrights and early settlers of Heart's Content in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. Since in my research on the internet I had already used it in my own family research on the Rowe family, it shocked me to learn from Alex that this manuscript had never been published. James Rowe is my fifth-great-grandfather through my grandmother Linda Rowe (who married Hayward Green of Hants Harbour). But I have a double connection to the Rowe family here because Melvin Rowe was the uncle of my aunt Madge, specifically the brother of her father James Rowe. Madeline married my uncle Bill Green and my parents knew Melvin.

My seventh-great-grandfather Edward Row was born about 1664 around Yeovil, Somerset, England. Mary Richards, the woman Edward would marry, was also born in the area of Yeovil, about 1668. They wed May 25, 1686 in Martock, Somerset. Through their grandson James Rowe they would become the progenitors of a shipbuilding enterprise which would spring up on the shores of Newfoundland in the year 1783. James (1733-1803), born in Yeovil, came to Trinity, Newfoundland with parents Edward and Christina. Edward was Justice of the Peace.

On a map of 1833 Trinity at the Trinity Historical Society archives, an acre or so of waterfront property labeled ``Row's Room'' is visible in a small cove on the west side of Hog's Nose. This map was viewed by the editor in 2007 (see Map p. 61). Waterfront was referred to as ``Room'' as it provided space for the dwellings, flakes, warehouses, and docks which served the needs of the community. The west side of Hog's Nose is well-sheltered as it is opposite the seaward side. It is evident that the section of coast just north of ``Row's Room'' is the place where shipbuilding was carried on in Trinity. In the 1930's the Rowes served as lighthouse keepers in Trinity, the lighthouse being situated on a head of land on the eastern side of the harbour.

Ninety-seven years before James Rowe left the town of Trinity on Trinity Bay in Newfoundland for the other side of the Bay, his grandfather Edward Row had married Mary Richards in Martock, Somerset, England. Their children were Mary (christened November 22, 1690), Jane (christened October 1, 1692), Edward (1699-1754), Samuel (born 1701), Betty (born 1707), and John (born 1711); these children were born in Yeovil, Somerset, England (see [APPENDIX A2: MORE FAMILY](#), p. 77). Some time later, the spelling of the name `Row' became `Rowe', but `Roe' and other forms are also seen. Edward, born in 1699, married Christina (her last name ostensibly Sheppard) and moved to Trinity before his death in 1754—perhaps on the very plantation which would bear the Row name in 1833. Edward's wife Christina

was born in 1713 and passed on in 1775. Settling in Newfoundland was at the time against British law.

Even when we acknowledge the work of author Melvin Rowe for the important work that it is it is appalling how little we actually know about the early communities and the families which pioneered them. Having said that, it is true that we do know a considerable amount more about the Rowe family than the present work would indicate, and which the editor discovered in his own research of the Rowe name, he being possessed of the same lineage. The Rowe family includes historic figures such as Sir Everard de Rowe, who hailed from Kent in the 12th century and was given a gift of lands in the area of Plymouth, Devon. '[Descendants of Sir Everard de Rowe](#)', a 77-page document containing a detailed family record which is scarcely in question, gives the following concerning Sir Everard de Rowe:

''At Lamerton near Plymouth the family was long possessed of a considerable estate which was handed down from generation to generation, evidently since the days of Richard the First. It was in the days of the crusades that the founder of the house received as a token of his bravery in the holy wars the arms since borne by his descendants.''

Richard I Lion Heart is himself from the Rowe family line, and was the thirteenth Duke of Normandy. Henry Beauclerc, the son of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders, would have a daughter Matilda by means of Matilda Edith of Scotland. Henry's daughter married Geoffrey of Anjou. Geoffrey and Matilda had a son Henry who ruled England as Henry II Plantagenet from 1154-1189, and Henry, the twelfth Duke of Normandy from Rollo, had a son Richard by means of his marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine. This is Richard I Lion Heart.

On December 25th of 1066, lands in Norfolk, England, were given to Rowe family members by the victor of the Battle of Hastings as reward for their assistance in that battle. That man would be known as William the Conqueror. He was also the first Duke of Normandy to gain a certain kingship when *he became William I, King of England*. William was an illegitimate son of Robert I Duke of Normandy, and was unkindly dubbed William the Bastard. William's grandfather was Richard III Duke of Normandy, his great-grandfather Richard II Duke of Normandy, and his great-great-grandfather Richard I Count of Normandy. Richard I was the son of William I 'Longsword', the first man to hold the title 'Duke of Normandy'. But Longsword's father may be considered as the first Duke of Normandy, at least in everything except title. This first Duke was **Rollo**, the third great-grandfather of William I King of England, the Conqueror. Who was Rollo? He is a Viking ancestor in direct descendancy to Queen Elizabeth II.

Also known as 'Ganger-Hrolf', 'Rolf the Walker', and 'Robert of Normandy', it was said that he got his name from the fact that his legs were so long he preferred to walk, not ride. When he settled in the northern part of France known as Normandy, he lived in a place known today as Rouen, French language influence having removed the 'll's (see also [APPENDIX A1: FAMILY](#)).

From *timeref.com*:

''Rollo, in return for land in Northern France, swore allegiance to the French king Charles III. Charles' motives were to use a settled band of Vikings in his country to help prevent more Viking attacks in the future. The hope that Charles may have had of removing the Vikings at a later date proved impossible to implement.''

While this book is not about Viking ancestry, the family history does involve a well-documented family history of Viking lineage on both paternal and maternal sides. Rollo's grandmother Aseda, for example, married her third cousin Eysteinn, sharing with him second-great grandfather Halfdan Olafsson (born 704).

As we have seen, the Rowe name has a history with the English ``royals'' and the Viking ``Rollo''. While that history prefigures our story of Heart's Content Shipbuilders, together they stagger in their depth, conveying the reader gracefully through a time when Canada would wax a country, having its origin in the days of sea-going entrepreneurs who by the vast waters of the Atlantic Ocean were little deterred in their quest for seal pelts and codfish oil. These early settlers were laying the groundwork for what would be a new nation. But through their story we learn not only of their independence, yet of the simple way with which this simple people met with their most difficult circumstances, coping in good humour under the harshest of our severe Canadian conditions, where rocky harbours served as an illusion for safe haven from the inestimable power of Jehovah's weather and sea. Family life had to cope with drama at times, lives being threatened by hunger and by disease. The heroism that arose in response to difficult circumstances was ordinary for these faithful people. Faith played a major part in their lives, and they knew who their Saviour was, whether salvation came by drinking rum to stave off deathly cold or through the pioneering use of a vaccine. For the families and their descendants, the story provides hope. What part the first shipwrights played in this story is essential, wooden ships having served the needs of early fishermen, seal hunters, merchants, and commuters alike in the centuries prior to the introduction of the BLOODHOUND in 1863. The ships themselves have long since been abandoned, their wooden hulls left to rot on a beach in some coastal wasteland. But the ingenuity of those builders may live on.

Melvin writes eloquently of shipwrights James Moore and Rowe's dock founder James Rowe: ``When James Moore came upon the scene as a master builder he was forced through changing circumstances in ship construction into a more demeaning and less glamorous career than his father and other shipwrights had experienced in their lifetimes. James knew that the romantic, colourful and exciting days of the square riggers, barques, brigantines, and barquentines had long passed in the mercantile trade and in the annual seal hunt to be replaced by the drab, dull, and unspectacular steam-powered ships. Consequently, those grand and fascinating wooden hulls were deliberately condemned and beached along the shorelines by their owners to be pounded to smithereens by the incessant and rolling seas. In many instances their ribs and planks could be seen above the waterline or low water mark as a mute reminder of an era when ``*wooden ships and iron men*'' was a common expression.

...

``James Rowe's long years of toil and dedication to his trade were well-known, as was the work of his sons and grandsons along with the many other famed shipwrights of Heart's Content. They were all recognized for their creativity, ingenuity and ability as master craftsmen while they were engaged in the trade, but they *were soon forgotten a few years after they threw off this mortal coil*. It is my fervent wish that this brief narrative in which I have attempted to revive some of their past deeds, will alert and bring out in this generation and succeeding generations the greatness of their ancestors. Let it not be said of these great men that their leaving a life militant for a life expectant was a case of ``SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI'' (so the glory of this world passes away).''

Edward and Christina Rowe's children were: James (born Yeovil 1733-1803), Thomas (born about 1735), Edward (born about 1744), and Christian (born 1745). James Rowe plays the founding role in our story, as he would be the first of a line of master shipwrights to build wooden vessels on the south side of Trinity Bay. Others would follow him, but in time the great ships which had captured

the imagination of three generations of Rowes would go the way of flesh—perishing, their spirit returning to the Great Dockyard in the Sky.

1. JAMES ROWE: ROWE'S DOCK, JOHN ROWE

Heart's Content, for anyone who may be wondering, is a quiet town on the coast of Newfoundland having a remarkably well-sheltered, horseshoe-shaped harbour. It lies about 33 miles northeast of Pinchgut, or 86.5 miles hard north of Mistaken Point.

The first chore that confronted James when he arrived in Heart's Content in 1783 and before he could get on with the task of starting up his dock was to build a house large enough to accommodate his steadily growing family. Fortunately for him he did not have to go any distance to get materials to frame his house, as on all sides of him stood large timber which he could cut down and size into various shapes for a commodious and comfortable dwelling.

But did James know that five generations of the immediate family would occupy the residence before it was demolished in 1918? As a small boy I often walked through the eight rooms and played with the children who lived within its walls. I took pleasurable delight in racing up the winding stairs—some twenty steps—and gripping the brightly-lacquered handrails to reach the second floor.

In a photograph of the house taken some seventy-five years ago, James' ability as a carpenter could be seen, the quality of his work being reflected in the sturdy way in which he built the dwelling (—Photo where available). Found in a chimney block of the house, a Book of Common Prayer printed in London in 1783 documents the births of ten children.

The children of James and Ann Rowe were *Mary* (born December 4, 1774), *Edward* (born March 9, 1775), *Cristian* (born January 24, 1777), *William Sheppard* (born January 18, 1779), *Ann* (born January 22, 1781), *John* (born October 20, 1783), *James* (born September 11, 1785), *Thomas* (born May 24, 1787), *Martin Sheppard* (born June 9, 1789), and one (not legible, born 1791). The last child is *Charlotte*, as indicated by baptisms performed in Heart's Content by the official of St. Paul's Church, Trinity (see also [APPENDIX A1: FAMILY](#), p. 74).

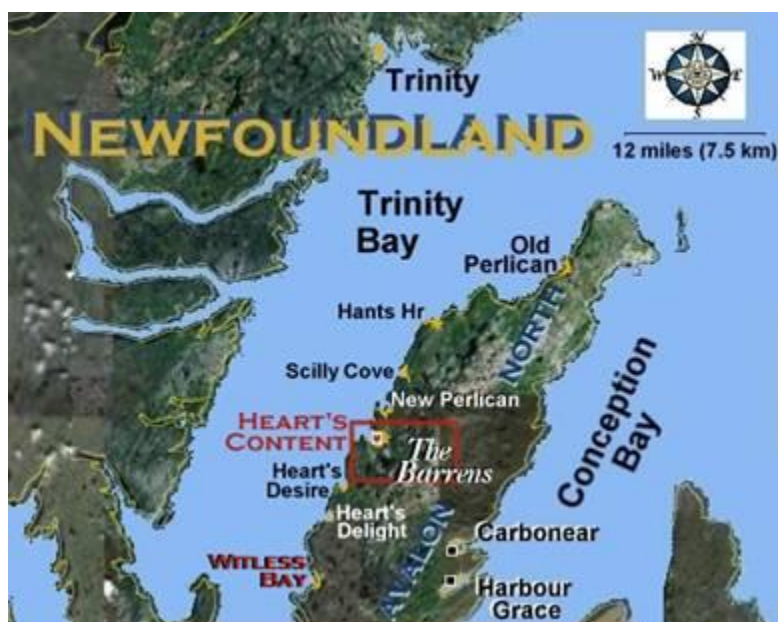
The kitchen's open fireplace was about 5 feet high, 4 feet deep and 10 feet long while below the varnished mantelpiece was a long iron bar called the "pot bar" from which the pot hooks suspended the culinary used in earlier days for cooking. Pots would be suspended above "dog irons" which served as a place for an open fire. With the turn of the 19th Century, the "heated-and-contained-iron" had replaced the "dog irons" to greatly ease the burden and drudgery of the housewife. The new fanged stove was placed in the centre of the open fireplace and the circular iron-pipe chimney allowed the smoke and soot to escape into the atmosphere. What took my fancy was the 12-foot-long varnished mantel with its ornaments, baubles, gewgaws and curios placed side by side the length of the mantelpiece. To embellish the mantel and to give it a truly maritime flavour there were miniatures of fractional-scale wooden models of schooners, brigantines and square-riggers.



Edward Rowe d. 1790 aged 46 yrs Grave, St. Paul's, Trinity—Ward Green 2007



James Rowe d. 1803 aged 70 yrs Grave, St. Paul's, Trinity—Ward Green 2007



Trinity Bay Area Map—Ward Green 2007



The above represents the Rowe Coat of Arms as displayed at houseofnames.com.

Trinity, Newfoundland

The children of Edward Rowe (1699-1754) and wife Christina (possibly, Sheppard) Rowe:

Name	M/F	Born	Died	Wed 1	Spouse 1	Wed 2	Spouse 2
James	M	1733	1803	~1773	Mary Ann Burrage		
Thomas	M	~1735		~1756	Elizabeth	1776	Elizabeth Hurdle
Edward	M	~1744	1790	~1777	Patience		
Christian	F	1745				1766	Thomas Street

The above represents the family of Edward and Christina Rowe late of Trinity, married about 1730, from John Rowe's ``Rowes of Newfoundland'' (www3.sympatico.ca/john.rowe).

Trinity, Newfoundland

The children of Edward Rowe (~1744-1790) and wife Patience Rowe:

Name	M/F	Born	Died	Wed 1	Spouse 1	Wed 2	Spouse 2
Christiana	F	1778		yes			
Elizabeth	F	1783		yes			
Mary	F	1785		1802	Capt. James Breddy		
Sarah	F	1786		yes			
Ann	F	1788		yes			

The above represents the family of Edward and Patience Rowe of Trinity, married about 1777, from John Rowe's ``Rowes of Newfoundland'' (www3.sympatico.ca/john.rowe) .