

Moments in Our History

(Excerpts from the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's 1775 – 1975)

A Sufficiency of Land (Part 8)

That same month, John Jones drew upon Mr. George Kemp, merchant at Poole for £ 100 and purchased the land from “Andrew Barnes, Senior, of St. John’s in the Island of Newfoundland, Planter.” The Bill of Sale, recorded in the Courts of Session Books, pages 200-202, is dated 12 August 1787 and signed by James Woodmason, Chief Justice. Andrew Barnes had previously purchased the land from John Freeman....

Before building could begin, however, the permission of “His Excellency John Elliot, Esq., Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Island of Newfoundland, etc.” had to be obtained. “The petition of John Jones, Dissenting Minister in behalf of that Church humbly sheweth that... your Petitioners have paid regard to your Excellency’s Orders issued last fall respecting any future buildings in this Harbour, the land in question being more than an Hundred Feet above the Upper Path.” The Governor appointed Captain Gower of H.M.S. Salisbury to survey the land “with the assistance of two persons acquainted with the Fishery.” Seventeen years later the same Captain Gower returned to Newfoundland as Governor. He little knew that a little north of the land he was surveying that day the first planned street of St. John’s would be laid out and named in his honour. Captain Gower reported that the site was well within the regulations and “will not be in any way detrimental to the Fishery.” Permission to build was granted.