

## Biscayne Cove

**Biscayne Cove is the name given to a sheltered cove just south of Cape St. Francis, facing the open Atlantic Ocean. A community of fishermen and their families settled there in the early 1800s, and occupied the area until after the Second World War, when they gradually moved to Pouch Cove, into St. John's or went even farther away, to pursue jobs. The community is now abandoned but lives in the memories of former residents and their families.**

**Biscayne (*BIS-en*) Cove has also been written Biscan, Biscen, Biscane, Biscayan and Bissen Cove. No one seems to know the source of the name, but it may be a reference to the Bay of Biscay, on the other side of the Atlantic, an area famous for its stormy, wild ocean.**

**The shoreline at Biscayne Cove was a bit more sheltered than in Pouch Cove, and the fishing grounds were close to shore, so it attracted settlers. Settlers in the community included the Butt, Vaters, Mulley, Sainsbury, Hudson and Rose families.**

**A photo taken in the late 1930s shows summer houses, flakes, stages and the road down to the community's launch that was built originally in the 1800s to land material for the lighthouse, and then maintained by local fishermen as a boat launch.**



Their *winter houses* were located on the road from Pouch Cove to the Cape, near the top of "Spud Rock Hill," so called (according to one source) because the rocks there were round, like potatoes. In the summers they moved to their *summer houses* near the shore, where they had stages and extensive flakes for drying fish.



Herb Hudson's family at Biscayne Cove

The fishing inshore was very good. Harrison Hudson and Cecil Rose, born in Biscayne Cove, four days apart in July, 1927, both told us that on one of the days between their births the men of the community landed 100 quintals (11,200 pounds!) of cod, taken from the community's cod traps in one day. There were about a dozen trap berths in and around the offshore islands. There was also some trawling – fishing with a long line with about a hundred hooks on it, baited with squid or capelin.

Fish was sorted into several grades: Madeira, West Indies and Mercantile, depending on how good it was. The fishermen brought their fish to Gruchy's Store in Pouch Cove, TJ Hallett's in St. John's or the Pouch Cove Fishermen's Co-operative.

Cecil Rose recalls that his father cut grass for hay, kept a horse, two goats, chickens for eggs and hunted for ducks. They kept summer gardens where they grew potatoes, cabbage and other crops. Farmers from Pouch Cove grazed their sheep on the surrounding hills.

The children had their daily chores. They brought in firewood for heat, filled the kerosene lamps and carried water in buckets from wells near their houses. They picked berries which were exchanged for supplies from the local merchants. When they were old enough, they joined the fishery. They "cut tails" of their fish to mark them, and earned whatever the fish were worth, when sold.

Until the 1940s there were no vehicles in the community; people travelled by horse and buggy or horse-drawn slide in the winter or they walked when they needed to go into Pouch Cove. Bert Moores remembers Ed Noseworthy and Herb Hudson kept horses. The clergyman would walk out, before the church was built, and hold service in the open air, at Cripple Cove. Bert Moores told us that halfway along the lovely path over the hill to Cripple Cove from Biscayne Cove, there is a rock called "Minister's Rock." It was shaped like a chair, and the minister would stop and sit there to smoke his pipe before he continued along the path.



Cecil Rose



Biscayne Cove United Church

The United Church in Biscayne Cove opened in 1901. The clergyman would walk from Pouch Cove each Sunday, or travel by horse and slide in the wintertime to lead services in Biscayne Cove. When he wasn't available, a lay preacher would lead the service. The minister would stay with Fred Rose and walk back to Pouch Cove the next day. There were seven pews in the church. Each family had their own. The Mulleys had good strong voices and Cecil Rose recalls that Aunt Ira (Mulley) Hudson led the singing.

Frank Vater's grandfather Henry Butt and his friend Fred (Fredrick) Rose were lost when the ice pan on which they were standing drifted out to sea. This happened on March 30, 1899. According to Herb Hudson, once people in the community realized the men had drifted away they lit bonfires along the shore to comfort them, but as the ice pan drifted further and further away, there was no way they could be rescued.



Herb Hudson

Before the turn of the century, bodies were brought into Pouch Cove for burial, because there was no church in the community. Between 1903 and 1951 those who died in Biscayne Cove were buried at the United Church Cemetery in the community. The list of those buried divides roughly into the old and the young. Of the 42 who died in those years, 23 were in their twenties or younger.

The Biscayne Cove School was opened in 1912. It was a one-room structure with a woodstove for heat. The classes went up to Grade Eleven. It was located just uphill from the church. There were about a dozen or more students in the school and a single teacher who taught all the grades. There were five or six desks, each shared by three students. Later, after the school was closed, classes were held in the lighthouse keeper's house at Cape St. Francis.

Deaths and Burials at Biscayne Cove 1903-1951  
Information taken from Death and Burial Records of the Pouch Cove Circuit.

Range	Date of Death	Age	
1/	Jessie Butt	Sept. 5, 1903	age 3 years
2/	Jessie Hudson	Nov. 5, 1903	age 24 years
3/	William Lewis Rose	Oct. 14, 1907	age 10 months
4/	Allen Mulley	Jan. 5, 1908	age 2 months
5/	Mary L. Rose	Mar. 19, 1908	age 2 months
6/	Charlotte Rose	Feb. 24, 1910	age 2
7/	Edward Hudson	Mar. 5, 1910	age 29 years
8/	Walter Rose	Jan. 31, 1911	age 3 months
9/	George Allan Rose	Feb. 24, 1911	age 2 61/2 Mths
10/	Florence Mary Butt	Sept. 14, 1913	age 28 1/2 years
11/	Cecil Butt	Feb. 13, 1915	age 6 months
12/	Lillian Mulley	Apr. 25, 1915	age unknown
13/	Sarah Jane Rose	Aug. 14, 1916	age 2 1/2 yrs
14/	Adam Mulley	Apr. 21, 1917	age 6 days
15/	Martha Mulley	Jan. 9, 1919	age 78 years
16/	Ellen Irving Vater	Sept. 18, 1917	age 11 weeks?
17/	Sarah Jane Vater	Sept. 18, 1917	age 11 weeks?
18/	Edward Vater	Jan. 25, 1920	age 60 years
19/	Jessie Mulley	July 2, 1920	age 37
20/	Francis Butt	Feb. 9, 1921	age 11 months
21/	Mary J. Rogers	June 4, 1921	age 64 years
22/	Ida W. Butt	Aug. 28, 1921	age 8 years
23/	Erlie Butt	May 9, 1924	age 8 months
24/	Maria Elizabeth Hudson	Jan. 25, 1925	age one day
25/	Michael Mulley	Feb. 28, 1925	a few minutes
26/	Mabel Butt	Apr. 5, 1926	age 1 year
27/	Dion Dell Hudson	Jan. 25, 1930	age 18 yrs
28/	Michael Mulley	Jan. 21, 1936	age 7 years
29/	Mabel Mulley	Apr. 11, 1936	age 2 years
30/	Maria Rose	Oct. 18, 1937	age 7 years
31/	Jane Pike	Mar. 24, 1937	age 37
32/	William Mulley	Oct. 3, 1937	age 70 years
33/	Andrew Butt	April 2, 1938	age 64
34/	Andrew Rose	Nov. 30, 1940	age 74 years
35/	Sarah Blanche Butt	Dec. 30, 1940	age 14 years
36/	Judy Hudson	Feb. 18, 1941	11 1/2 mos
37/	Gordon Mulley	Apr. 11, 1942	age 5 years
38/	Phillip Hudson	Sept. 12, 1942	age 4 months
39/	Robin Eugene Vater	Aug. 25, 1943	age 4 years
40/	William Mulley	July 25, 1948	age 26 years
41/	Mary Mulley	Oct. 26, 1948	age 01
42/	Gyivka Mulley	Sept. 19, 1951	age 2 1/2 years

*R. S. Hudson*

During the Second World War, American servicemen were stationed at Pouch Cove; they would drive out to the Cape to patrol the coast and keep an eye out for enemy ships. Sometimes, if you were walking back to Biscayne Cove, you could catch a ride with them. But they would also question anyone going out the road, because they were on the lookout for spies. Cecil Rose remembers being out fishing and seeing a German submarine going by on the horizon. It may have been the same U-boat that torpedoed and sank two ore carriers at Bell Island later that year.



Harrison and Doris Hudson

Harrison Hudson remembers that before the war started there was a knock on the door early one Sunday morning. His mother looked out and saw five men standing outside. They were German sailors who had come ashore from an ore carrier. They had defected from Germany. His father met them at the door with a bayonet in his hand. "Where you going with that?" asked his mother. "I mightn't get them all, but I'll get two of them before they gets in." They were just hungry. Harrison's father sent them on to the lighthouse, where they could find some food.

During the Second World War, things began to change. There was work in St. John's and many were drawn away; after the war, the market for fish was not strong. Men would walk into Pouch Cove, then catch a ride to town each day and walk home at the end of the day.

People began to move away after the war. Some of the residents who moved into Pouch Cove took their houses apart and used the materials to rebuild. When Cecil Rose's grandfather arrived in Biscayne Cove in 1885 he bought a house from Bill Joe Butt. That house was taken apart in 1943, and the wood was used to build a house in which Cecil and Joyce later lived, in Pouch Cove. They were the first to leave. Michael Mulley was the last of the full time residents to leave; he moved to St. John's in 1970.

We thank Bert Moores, Cecil Rose, Herb Hudson and Harrison Hudson for much of the information presented here.



Bert Moores